THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 7 June, 1925 Number 6

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"Mirrors of the Kremlin, By a Comrade With a Duster."

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NOTES of the MONTH

Conflict Ahead—Revolutionary Wage Issues—Truth from Thomas—The Lesson of the Triple Alliance—Towards the Workers' Alliance—Baldwin and the Economic Situation—Whose Responsibility?—The Future Solution—The Immediate Solution—Parasitism of Capitalism—The Fallacy of Compensation—Expropriation and Revolution—Reviving British Industry—Patriotism of the Bourgeoisie—A Textile Example—An Imperialist Bourgeoisie—A Plain Answer—Facing the Future.

A BIG battle in industry is in front. This much is certain although the stages and method of its approach are not yet clear. The demands and counter-demands that have now been put forward, alike for the railwaymen, the engineers, the miners and the builders, may prove no more than a preparing of the ground. The workers' forces are not yet organised for a common front, and it is abundantly clear that without that common front victory under modern conditions is no longer possible, save in exceptional and favourable circumstances. The employers' forces are preparing their strategy with the concealment which is their advantage, and may endeavour to strike their blow before the workers are prepared. But although the conditions and grounds of strategy are more complex than they have ever been before, the line of direction of the two forces is clear beyond dispute. The industrial magnates have repeatedly declared with more and more insistence that they must bring wages and hours down to Continental standards if they are to compete with Continental industry. The workers on their side are driven forward by the necessity of actual want and conditions admittedly worse and nearer to starvation than before the war. Between these two forces, unless one or other gives way, there can only be collision; and no talk of industrial peace can alter this. This is the first fact to recognise.

THERE was a time when wage issues could be regarded as secondary issues in the workers' struggle, representing no more than the ups and downs of the economic situation and

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relative working-class and capitalist organisation within capitalism, and not representing any direct attack upon capitalism. Those were the days when trade union officials were essentially business officials, whose function was to sell their men's labour for the best bargain they could get, having regard to the commercial conditions of the market. A trade union official could claim to be faithfully representing the interests of his men, and yet be friends with the employers and deny the class war. Those days are over. *To-day, in the period of the decline of British capitalism, wage issues have become in fact revolutionary issues.* This is the second fact which must be frankly recognised. "Commercial practicability" can be no longer the basis of calculation. That way lies complete subjection of the workers. We have reached a point when the workers are compelled to fight as a class, and when the challenge on wages is inevitably a challenge to the capitalist control of industry. The move to a class combination of the workers in the projected multiple Workers' Alliance is a recognition of the new conditions. It means not simply an extension of the old type of struggle. It means a transference of the struggle to a new plane.

MR. THOMAS, attacking the proposed Workers' Alliance, declared that it meant in fact a revolutionary challenge to the existing system of society. Mr. Thomas considerably exaggerates the speed of events, in dealing with what is at present no more than a simple defensive measure. Nevertheless the issue which he raises is ultimately the real issue, and the sooner we recognise it and it is recognised by the widest numbers of workers, the better for the future. We can no longer fight upon a limited field. The attempt to wage the simple economic struggle means in fact a struggle with the entire forces of capitalist society. If we shrink from facing this fact, we are defeated before we begin. We do not want to repeat the failure of the Triple Alliance. Let us recognise frankly the character of the struggle in front. It is fortunate that wider and wider numbers of workers are becoming conscious of the issue. When Mr. Thomas declared to the Glasgow mass meeting of railwaymen, as his final argument against the Workers' Alliance, that "if it succeeded, those responsible must be prepared to take over the government of the nation," this threat was

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received by the hostile meeting, according to the report of the *Daily Herald*, with " loud cheers."

WHAT was the failure of the Triple Alliance? In the last analysis it amounted to this. The Triple Alliance was an attempt to create machinery for a wider combination and a wider struggle of the workers, such as modern conditions clearly necessitated, without facing the revolutionary issue that that wider machinery and wider struggle inevitably raised. What was the consequence? The inevitable consequence was that so soon as the crisis came, and its revolutionary character became apparent, those in control of the machine became terrified at the spirits they had themselves raised, and, after vainly trying to postpone the evil day, when at last the issue could be no longer evaded, at the last moment threw up their cards without playing them and ran away. This historic " treachery," like all great treacheries, lay, not simply in the personal characters of the individual leaders, but in the failure of a whole past epoch to face the conditions of the next. Just as 1914 was the exposure, not primarily of certain insignificant individuals, but of the Second International, so 1921 was the exposure, not primarily of certain individuals in our movement, but of the whole old movement.

CAN we escape the failure of the Triple Alliance in the new Workers' Alliance? That is not a question to be lightly answered. The transformation of the movement to the plane of the new struggle has still very far to go. The long delays and obstacles even to the formation of the Workers' Alliance show the heavy weight of weaknesses and old conceptions that still beset the movement and will clog any advance, even when made in form. Nevertheless an advance has been made. The experience of 1921, and still more the experience of the deadly depression and misery under victorious capitalism that followed that defeat, has taught strong lessons. There is a deeper understanding of the revolutionary issue, an end of the old lighthearted expectation of easy victories, and a more responsible appreciation of the struggle in front. It is our task to strengthen that understanding, to make clear the character of the struggle in front, and to show the

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inevitable necessity of that struggle. The strength and success of the new experiment will depend in the last resort on the solidarity of the workers, and on the capacity, energy and activity of the revolutionary element in the working class.

"WE are passing through the gravest situation" declared Mr. Baldwin in a recent speech "as regards unemployment and the export trade that we have ever experienced"; and he proceeded to attack the criminal activities of those who at such a time should endeavour to overthrow the whole system. But this is precisely the time when it is necessary to overthrow the whole system. There is no hope whatever of permanently improving the conditions of the workers even to a living subsistence under the conditions of British capitalist industry to-day. This fact cannot be too widely proclaimed. The capitalist economists are fond of telling us that Britain lives upon exports, importing some five hundred million pounds' worth of food and needing to pay for it by coal and manufactured goods; that new industrial powers are springing up on every side; that markets are closing; that there is every prospect of this process increasing; and that Britain can only survive by lowering the costs of production, intensifying labour and maintaining industrial peace. The facts they quote are correct (and those in our ranks who too easily think that a simple raising of home wages will solve unemployment and provide the missing markets, will do well to take note of them); but before we accept their conclusions we have something more to say.

THE decline of British capitalist production is an historic process, which is not and cannot be prevented by any activity or inactivity of the workers, and which would go on none the less, even though the British workers were to work and live like slaves and bow their necks under the industrial peace of death. British capitalism in the nineteenth century recklessly gambled on the policy of converting Britain into the workshop of the world in order to make the largest and most immediate profits out of their temporary world priority in capitalist industry (just as in the generation before they gambled with the lives of the women and children

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of the country in order to make the fastest profits, until the process reached such a point that it had to be checked in the interests of future profits). Marx and Engels eighty years ago were alone in foretelling the inevitable outcome of this policy, when the time should come that the other nations would develop their industrial production and bring crashing to the ground the short-sighted dreams of the British bourgeoisie. To-day that process is in full force. Not only are the new industrial powers developing hand over hand, untrammelled by the rotten accumulation of vested interests, obsolete technique, individualist disorganisation, inflated capital, mortgaged industry, and army of idlers, State bondholders, rentiers and their parasitic servants, of Britain's older more historic capitalist apparatus ; but the rate of that development is bound to increase every year, relatively to Britain, and no power on earth can stop it.

WITHIN capitalism there is no way out but war ; and if capitalist production continues, world war is bound to follow, even though all the statesmen of the capitalist countries were to turn into devoted Christians and fanatical worshippers at the shrine of the League of Nations (which they show no sign of doing yet). But war itself only intensifies the crisis, and leads the way to revolution. Beyond capitalism the only final solution is the world Socialist organisation of production ; when alone the increased production and expansion of every part becomes the increased wealth of the whole, when alone it is possible scientifically to allot the proportions of production according to capacity to the different areas of the earth, and when alone it becomes ultimately possible within the unified world republic to organise expansions and contractions of production, and facilities for migrations of population, according to the already easily calculable varying needs.

BUT in the interim period, while the battle for the world Socialist republic still continues, there is no way out for the British people from the dilemma that is closing in upon them, save by the elimination of the parasitism of the bourgeoisie. It is not only a question of the organisation of production against unorganised production—a question on which the minds of the

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people are still confused by Press propaganda, and the unrivalled possibilities in Britain more than anywhere of rapidly organising unified large-scale production are still in the main only known to the technical experts. This also could be accomplished within capitalism, if the British bourgeoisie had still progressive capacity, by the advance to State capitalism (so-called evolutionary "Socialism" with compensation). The failure to carry through any such reorganisation—unification with State Control, and the utilisation of modern potentialities of technique and power, as indicated by the plans of the bourgeoisie themselves at the end of the war, but never carried through—is a measure of the decay of British capitalism.

BUT it is also a question of a direct deadweight of parasitism which cannot be removed within capitalism. This deadweight of parasitism exists in all capitalist countries, but is heavier in Britain than in any other country or at any previous point in capitalist development (or indeed any social development since the Roman Slave Empire). The seven and a half thousand millions of National Debt, held as to 95 per cent. by the wealthy and representing a social burden without return of three hundred millions a year or roughly £20 a year per worker, is only a portion of the total deadweight of inflated capital and parasitic incomes (representing a corresponding proportion of parasitic or wasted labour) which British production has to carry. The recent Occupation Census figures showed that only 489 per 1,000 "gainfully occupied persons" in England and Wales were engaged on "production, repair and maintenance." The largest single group —the principal "industry" in modern Britain is "Commerce and Finance"—with two and a quarter millions, or roughly six millions of the population living by the jugglery of exchange and speculation. Near to it, the third group—the third principal "industry" in modern Britain—is "Personal Service" (servants to whom? not to the workers, who form four-fifths of the population) numbering actually over two millions of the working population in England and Wales alone. And this is leaving out of account the unproductive weight of unemployment of over a million of the best workers, the industrial productive workers. It is doubtful whether

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such a picture of cancerous decay has ever been displayed in history. The situation revealed by these figures is of cardinal importance for all our problems, and not least for the urgency of our task : and we shall have occasion to return to other aspects of these figures in the future.

THIS parasitism cannot be got rid of within capitalism. It cannot be got rid of by any system of taxation or nationalisation with compensation. So long as the capital holding remains and is respected, the form is indifferent. The practical effect of a process of nationalisation with compensation is only to hasten a process already taking place—the transference of the active interest of the British bourgeoisie to foreign and imperial enterprise, as home production becomes less profitable, with the consequent intensification of class divisions, imperialist expansion, servitude of the home workers, and parasitism. The evolutionary Socialists who imagine that they can first compensate and then tax out of existence are indulging a small Utopian dream, which is only a cover of their desire to avoid a conflict. This fact is already beginning to be recognised by the more clear-sighted in their ranks. In a significant article the *New Statesman*, after declaring that " the evolutionary conception of Socialism necessarily involves compensation," goes on to declare that " before the war it was all very well to talk of taxing the capitalists out of existence. But, nowadays, even Socialists have to admit that taxation cannot be pushed much further without reacting seriously on production." The problem of the direct taking over of production cannot be escaped. There is no elimination of capitalist monopoly save by eliminating that monopoly. So long as the monopoly, that is, the capital holding, continues, its results will continue. The parasitism of capital can only be got rid of by direct expropriation, *i.e.*, by the proletarian revolution.

ONLY the proletarian revolution can free British production from the shackles which bind it. This is the central fact of the British economic situation which must be driven home, not only to all the millions of workers, but to all the millions of petty bourgeoisie who at present look out on their own

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desperate situation in blind confusion and small jealousies fed by the Press of the big bourgeoisie. To the millions of unemployed workers, workers on short time and workers who are sacked, who despair of finding re-employment under capitalism ; to the millions of workers on cut wages who see no hope of escape from the grind of want and toil for themselves and their children ; to the millions of small owners and small dealers who continue to carry on a hopeless struggle against intensified competition and the impoverishment of the workers and small consumers who are their market, and only sink in debt ; to the millions of clerks and small professionals who are ground down without even the strength of organisation : to all these this central fact must be made clear, not as an abstract political slogan, but as a concrete necessity demonstrated by the thousand facts of daily life. It is not a question of abstract "Socialism" as a far-away picture of heaven ; it is the direct necessity of the expropriation of the capitalist parasites and the taking over of production by the strong hand of the working class that must become a picture seen and felt by all.

THERE is no inherent incapacity in British natural conditions that prevents the winning of a livelihood by the population. The material resources are still rich ; the machinery is there ; the skill of the workers is unequalled in any other country. The machine goods that can be produced are needed all over the world (not least in Russia), provided they can be produced at a price within reach, that is to say, a price which does not bear the toll of thousands of parasites at every stage of production, so that the parasite toll is actually larger than the cost of production. It is this stranglehold of accumulated capital claims on industry, unequalled in any other country (in the Continental countries inflation has wiped out or reduced to a fraction the old claims, in the new countries there is not the same historic background), which drags down and makes impossible the revival or reorganisation of British industry. The bourgeoisie, who came strutting forward in the guise of patriots to appeal to the workers to be "reasonable" and work hard and long (in order to provide them with their fantastic incomes—in 1923-4, 542 individuals in Britain each took over £50,000 a year for themselves) and so save the

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"common" interest in industry, are in reality the direct enemies of British industry. This is the fact that the workers must realise.

MORE than that the British bourgeoisie is not only incapable of reviving British industry, but is to an increasing extent becoming no longer primarily interested in British industry. Capital knows no country save as an area of exploitation and for the purpose of providing it with a State machine as a basis of power. The patriotism of capital is only of the "army and navy" "jingo" variety. Capital flows where profit is highest, and for a long time now that has meant outside Britain. The yearly figures of new capital investments reveal this. Last year, for example, of a total of £223 millions capital invested, £134 millions went overseas; and this is a normal modern proportion. It should further be noted that of the £89 millions invested at home, £17 millions went to "Investment and Trust Companies," £13 millions to municipal loans, and £7½ millions to the Newspaper Trusts, leaving in the end a very small proportion of the total £223 millions for home industrial production. Thus the capital which is raised out of the British workers goes to equip new development abroad, which help to replace British production, to the profit of the British bourgeoisie, but to the ruin of the British workers.

IT is sometimes argued that this investment for industrial development abroad, which is the highest form of imperialism, in reality benefits home industry by the placing of contracts, &c. A single example will make the real position clear. In a recent commercial newspaper we read the following :—

> Some British textile manufacturers, anticipating future possibilities and meeting present difficulties, have already *established themselves in Australia*, and invested capital in Australian companies. I need only mention the names of W. C. Gaunt, Salts, Patons and Baldwins, and Kelsall and Kemp, to show that some of the leading firms in the British textile trade have seen the wisdom of this step, and incidentally *profited accordingly*.
>
> A substantial number of Australian textile companies are paying regular dividends of 10 per cent. and more (many on substantially watered capital) and placing large sums to reserve each year. *They escape freight and handling and other charges involved in the shipment of raw material to England and the importation of the manufactured article from the same country.* (Italics mine.)
>
> —*Manchester Guardian Commercial.* March 12, 1925.

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Let it be remembered that of British exports to Australia in 1923-4, amounting to £63·4 millions, £24·9 millions' worth, or nearly 40 per cent., were textiles, and the imperial patriotism of the British textile lords, who thus make higher profits for themselves and unemployment for their workers, will be clear. British textile workers, who have still the repute of being "sane" and not revolutionary, will take note of this.

WHAT does this mean? It means that the "British" bourgeoisie is becoming more and more only nominally "British," and in reality a modern imperialist bourgeoisie, using Britain as its base, and decreasingly interested in the condition of the British workers (save as cannon fodder—the only direction in which the terrible reports of the low health of the population have caused alarm) and in the revival of British industry. The return to the gold standard with the applause of all respectable City opinion and in the face of a few isolated industrialist protests is a symptom of this. Let it be noted that in all the present industrial depression, right through the worst of it, the bourgeoisie has continued to make tremendous profits. The *Economist's* tabulation of industrial company results shows average net profits of 8, 9, and 10 per cent. right through the crisis. The value of estates subject to Estates Duty has increased steadily: 1920-1, £372 millions; 1921-2, £402 millions; 1922-3, £431 millions; 1923-4, £441 millions. It is only the workers who have been brought down and have had to lose from their scanty wages an aggregate of one to two thousand million pounds. The divorce between the interests of the British bourgeoisie and the British working population is absolute.

FOR this reason we must meet the advocates of industrial harmony, when they come to us with long stories of the ruin of British industry and the impossibility of facing any advance with a plain answer. We must tell them that the failure of which they speak (so far as it is true, and not a made-up story) is not the failure of British industry, but of British capitalist industry. We must tell them that the workers are not prepared to listen to the tales of "ruin," when the wealth of the British bourgeoisie mounts up

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every year and flaunts itself in the face of all. We must tell them that, just as the bourgeoisie have known to look to themselves and their profits right through the " crisis " that brought ruin to the mass of the population, so the workers will learn better to look to themselves in the future. And we must tell them finally that, if they are not prepared to continue on our terms, then, when the time comes, the British proletariat will be ready to take over.

IN the immediate situation we must go forward with the wage struggle in front without hesitation and with a clear realisation of the ultimate goal that we must reach. We must not let ourselves be turned aside by the "commercial" arguments of the enemy, or by the largeness of the issues that are raised. The " commercial " arguments are invalid, because they presuppose the continuance intact of the whole framework of capitalism that we are challenging. The largeness of the issues that inevitably arise from modern large scale industrial conflicts must be faced, if we are not to submit to perpetual defeat. We have reached a point at which the old easy advance within the accepted framework of capitalism is no longer possible. Two alternatives confront the movement—either to surrender and go down into perpetually worsening conditions with the British industrial decline, or to advance and face the inevitable revolutionary issue. We think that there can be no hesitation in the choice, once the issue is truly realised, for the mass of the British working class.

R. P. D.

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PROBLEMS OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

By P. BRAUN

OUR friend Purcell very frequently, and very appropriately, speaks of the "mosaic" of our movement. Yes, our movement does represent a very variegated picture. Worst of all, however, is the fact that many take pleasure in this diversity. They see in it the sign of a high development of civilisation. The most enthusiastic supporters of the mosaic speak with delight of our well cherished freedom, which has bestowed such blessings upon our movement.

At the risk of being thought a barbarian, I will permit myself to express the opinion that our mosaic is the result of our backwardness and not our special strength. Eleven hundred different unions—that is the first symptom of our belauded variety. The absence of the habits of fighting is, on the one hand, the result of this variety of organisations, and, on the other hand, it renders possible the existence side by side of the most differing and frequently contradictory tendencies. In a debating society the struggle of opinion is not only lawful but inevitable. But a fighting army would be condemned to endless defeats if it were to prefer the struggle of opinion to co-ordinated action. And our movement suffers defeat so frequently just because it prefers mosaic to unity.

It may be said that the capitalists' camp in Britain, too, has not that iron discipline which strikes you on the Continent. But is that true? I venture to suggest that appearances are deceitful. The ruling classes of Britain are distinguished by their very great elasticity. They can combine the royal mantle with the democratic toga in the most artistic fashion. And they know how to pursue a single policy, pitilessly and logically, under the garb of freedom. They permit, and sometimes even arrange, fiery discussions on questions of second-rate importance. But they march in a single phalanx, when it is a question of the vital interests of the system they represent and defend. They always attack with a united front.

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With us it is the opposite. We talk a great deal about solidarity and unity ; but when matters come to action, there we fail. As a result we go from Black Friday to Black Saturday.

Yet never has our mosaic so visibly reflected our helplessness as it does to-day.

What is the peculiar character of the present moment? We are witnessing a certain stabilisation of the capitalist system and capitalist outlook. The stabilisation is taking shape in an ever increasing arrogance of the ruling classes. In 1919 they manœuvred very cautiously. By commissions, conferences, advisory councils and promises they tried to evade those acute problems which were created in the course of demobilisation. Their manœuvre on the whole succeeded, and in 1921 they began to speak more firmly. With "Black Friday" begins the fall of the revolutionary wave not only in Britain, but throughout Europe, since Britain, notwithstanding the increased strength of America, was and remains the leading capitalist power in Europe and one of the most important factors of world imperialism.

By fire and sword capitalism restored the "equilibrium" disturbed by the war, having recourse to various methods in different parts of the world. Particularly, great inventiveness was shown by the British bourgeoisie. In the Colonies it mostly utilised chemistry and aviation (aeroplane bombing). Together with America, it helped the lesser capitalist brethren by means of gold. In Britain itself it skilfully utilised our splendid mosaic, preferring flanking manœuvres to a frontal attack. Amongst recent manœuvres the most outstanding was, of course, the dissolution of Parliament in 1923, which brought about the temporary existence of the MacDonald Government.

Of course, Baldwin did not dream that in barely twelve months he would succeed in inflicting such a blow on the Labour Party, and in returning to power with such a swollen majority. But in real life his most audacious expectations were surpassed. In return for the shadow of power, the MacDonald Government assumed the difficult task of clearing a way for reaction, at home, in the Empire, and in the sphere of foreign policy.

To-day, triumphant reaction is beginning to execute its economic programme, which may be summed up in a brief formula :

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Longer working hours and lower wages.

The programme is dictated partly by the economic consequences of the war, and partly by those appetites which naturally develop in the victor.

Imperialist Britain has succeeded during the years after the war in setting into motion all those forces which it accumulated during the period of its prolonged world hegemony. But the threatening economic consequences of the war are stronger than the political wisdom of our ruling classes. When I say this I by no means wish to under-estimate the vast importance of the political experience of the British bourgeoisie. It is well known that that experience is one of the most important contributions made by Britain to the firm of Pound & Dollar, Limited. The owners of the rising dollar have to take lessons from the owner of the rather faded pound, not only in the sphere of economic geography, but in questions of the tactics and strategy of governing the world. At the same time the economic factors acquire gigantic strength. They will not be overcome by simple manœuvres. They require extremely careful attention.

The proud writers in the British press insistently—sometimes with importunity—lay stress nowadays on the kinship between Britain and her prodigal son, America. But Uncle Sam does not swallow the bait. In return for his friendship, he asks to be paid in hard cash for the enormous war debt, while at the same time he is suspiciously friendly with other "children" of his old mother (Canada and Australia). On the world market Uncle Sam feels that he is the master, and John Bull cannot but admit that America is a stronger rival on the high road of world robbery than Germany was before the war. America has grown stronger, and is pretty skilfully applying to Europe that policy of Balkanisation, in which it seemed that Britain was the past master. It seems that economic power contains within itself some elements of political wisdom which are accessible even to the American "upstarts."

It would also be a mistake to ignore France. Her franc is still jumpy but she has received a big inheritance from Germany, and in alliance with the new states she represents an important force. Moreover the last word in deciding the question of the balance of power in Europe belongs not to Britain, but to her

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" friend and partner " across the ocean, who is not sufficiently well-bred to hold the British gentleman as a man in sufficient honour and respect.

A still more serious factor in the economic life of Britain, which for years has lived with a thought that her destiny was to be the workshop of the world, is the industrialisation of the Dominions and Colonies. Sir Edward Grigg, formerly secretary to Lloyd George, has written a book, " The Greatest Experiment in History," in which he tears his hair at the thought that Britain permitted schools to be set up in India and Egypt. But tears will not help. A tendency towards separation is growing up in the Dominions, and towards independence in the Colonies. And still worse is the fact that both the Colonies and the Dominions have firmly entered the path of capitalist development, which undermines the privileged position of Britain as the monopolist purveyor.

And the eyes of the ruling classes of Britain involuntarily turn to the period of primitive capitalist accumulation, when they so easily and so carelessly created wealth out of the sweat and blood of their slaves, white and coloured !

When we note the deterioration in the economic position of Great Britain, we should not by any means accept in good faith the lamentations of our capitalist press. We know that the press exists to carry out propaganda, and terrorises its readers, in order to prevent the workers from fighting, not only for improved conditions but even to maintain the results already achieved. The British capitalist looks ahead. He is already thinking of the time when the workers will have to ballot on the question of a strike. And his aim is to frighten the workers by the spectre of economic competition, just as during the last election he terrified the maiden ladies by the spectre of revolution, emigrating to England from far away Moscow. In actual fact his position is not at all so terrible. He still has the opportunity for making a very respectable breakfast after a night in a very unrespectable club. But he would prefer that the working class, which earlier paid in blood for its " victory " during the World War, should now continue to pay for all the defeats imposed on mankind by the war.

Such in brief outline are the economic and psychological conditions attending the capitalist attack on the position of the

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working class. The question arises to what extent is our movement prepared for a counter-attack, and what must we immediately do to avoid a black anniversary.

We very often say that our movement is at the cross roads. And this, of course, is true. The organisational forms of our movement and its methods of struggle were built up in quite different economic circumstances. To-day circumstances have changed completely. The bourgeoisie has proved to be sufficiently skilful to adapt itself to the new conditions. It sticks at no means. It frightens the worker with the spectre of unemployment, at the same time organising detachments of strikebreakers. It continues to sing sweetly of liberty, while encouraging and defending the Fascisti. But the Labour Movement has so far proved unable to adapt itself to the new conditions.

The chief problem before the Labour Movement at the present time is just this : to re-equip itself for battle in accordance with the requirements of the new situation.

The solution of this problem as a whole would take me beyond the bounds of a single article, and I will limit myself to attempting to indicate those pressing questions which require immediate answer.

International Trade Union Unity

Everyone must agree with Swales[1] that the most important achievement during the last twelve months has been the establishment of an agreement and contact with the Soviet trade union movement. This coming together, which is valuable in itself, acquires special importance when we realise that it is a step towards establishing the unity of the international trade union movement, the necessity of which is suggested by the international character of capitalist stabilisation.

It is most characteristic that the rapprochement began with the coming together of our trade union movement and that of the Soviet Union. Our movement comes into direct conflict with that capitalist class which leads the attack of reaction. The Soviet trade unions are the bulwark of that country which has not only repelled all the capitalist attacks but continues to grow and be

[1]See his interview in the May Day number of the *Sunday Worker*.

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strengthened, in spite of the increasing hatred of stabilising capitalism. The alliance of these two organisations, British and Soviet, alone represents a vast force the importance of which is clearly indicated by the wild howl of the whole capitalist press.

But, as has been said, the Anglo-Russian agreement is the preliminary to the establishment of a united front of the world movement. And that object can be reached only if we soberly estimate all the difficulties which await us.

Our General Council came under heavy crossfire from the very moment it entered the path of rapprochement with the Soviet trade unions. Under the blows of its enemies, the movement for unity grew stronger and stronger in both countries. In the Soviet Union the workers' attitude towards closer friendship with our unions expressed itself in gigantic demonstrations which are partly dealt with in the Trade Union Delegation's Report on Soviet Russia. In Britain the actions of the Delegation received the approval of a vast number of working class organisations. The most vivid demonstrations must be reckoned, the Minority Conference in January, the National Conference of Trades Councils in February, and the Scottish Trades Union Congress, with the conferences of the N.U.D.A.W. and Shop Assistants, in April.

Against unity there naturally were mobilised not only our masters, but also the champions of class-collaboration, who, of course, see in the unity of the workers of different countries a threat to unity between Capital and Labour. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald fired the first shot in the battle against trade union unity. But even he did not dare to come out into the open. He preferred to come out with the " naïve " remark that contact with the German trade unions is probably more important than with the Russians. Mr. MacDonald realised very soon that this idea would not carry him very far. Everyone understood that what he had in mind was an alliance not with the German workers but with that bureaucracy of the German trade unions, who served the Kaiser so loyally during the war, Noske equally loyally during the Revolution, and which bears a vast proportion of responsibility for the fact that our capitalist class, in its attack on working conditions, is able to refer to German competition. With such a partner one cannot, of course, hope for great success. If we do not reckon the

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New Leader, which supported MacDonald as in duty bound, we can find only one former "leader", namely, Robert Williams, who took up the watchword launched by MacDonald. But by that time MacDonald himself had hastened to begin talking about Amsterdam, not about the Germans.

Amsterdam, the quiet capital of dreamy Holland, has become a term in the Labour movement for two different ideas. By Amsterdam we usually have in mind the International Federation of Trade Unions, which covers a considerable part of the European trade union movement. It is clear that trade union unity must include Amsterdam. But by Amsterdam we also have in mind the leaders of the German trade unions who function under a Dutch label, and keep the machinery in their hands, in spite of the fact that the presidency of the Amsterdam Federation belongs to the British trade unions. The Dutch label was required by the Germans in order to secure the support of Mr. Vandervelde, the Socialist Minister for the Versailles Treaty, and Mr. Jouhaux, the former Syndicalist. The internationalism of this German group is of very doubtful quality. They value international connections to the same extent as they were valued by Kaiser Wilhelm when he allowed the Social-Democratic leader Scheidemann to go to Stockholm during the War. *The international unity of the Labour movement will apparently have to be hammered out in struggle with this Amsterdam.*

From the foregoing it follows that what we require is not so much Anglo-Russian agreement as a Committee of Action, which would free the working class movement from the influence of those who would drag it into the swamp of collaboration with their own capitalist class. The leaders of the German-Dutch International represent now as great a danger for the Labour movement as did the leaders of the Second International at the beginning of the World War.

The capitalist press of the whole world has mobilised all its forces to defend Amsterdam No. 2. It is being assisted by such persons as MacDonald and Vandervelde. From time to time there come to its help political aviators like Postgate, who in January, 1925, did not yet understand to what a degree Amsterdam No. 2 was deliberately splitting the working-class ranks, and driving all the honest and militant elements out of the Labour movement.

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Postgate " got wise " only in March, when the wind began blowing very strongly in the direction of unity. But the winds did not move MacDonald. After all, it was only last year that he began to adopt the Amsterdam policy of expelling the revolutionary elements from the ranks of the Labour Party. It is not his fault that our trade unions not only did not follow his footsteps, but abruptly opposed his disruptive policy. Now MacDonald puts forward Amsterdam against the Anglo-Russian agreement.

Purcell gave the fitting reply to MacDonald in the May Day issue of the *Sunday Worker*, when he said that the real meaning of MacDonald's proposal was " that we are to break off friendship with those who stand for world-wide trade union unity, and the world-wide fight for the eight-hour day, and accept the point of view of those whose attitude on these questions has been diametrically opposed to our own at numerous discussions in the past. And this we have no intention of doing."

It is essential, without losing a single moment, to begin an energetic struggle against " Amsterdamism," whether it comes from Berlin or London. Both in Berlin and in London workers will be found to support the efforts made for the creation of a fighting International of trade unions.

Let the Anglo-Russian Council begin the fight !

Unity With the Colonies

It is most regrettable that our movement in this phase of unity of the trade union movement pays too little attention to the question of the Colonies. Amsterdam No. 1, *i.e.*, the International Federation of Trade Unions, showed little interest in the Colonies, for very easily understood reasons. The liberation of the oppressed peoples is not in any way compatible with social patriotism. But our movement, whether it wishes or no, is obliged to consider this question.

The Colonial question goes far beyond the bounds of the trade union movement. One need not be specially far-sighted to understand that the fate of the Labour Movement in the long run depends on whether the industrial workers will succeed in establishing a fraternal united front with the oppressed peoples of Asia and America. MacDonald and Thomas settle this question in the spirit

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of a brief formula—" the continuity of policy " of oppression and enslavement. This policy at best plays into the hands of the imperialists, widening the abyss between two sections of oppressed humanity. I say " at best," because it is obvious that the policy of oppression will inevitably involve a bloody struggle, out of which the oppressed masses of Eastern peoples, who constitute the majority of mankind, will in the long run emerge victorious.

The policy of MacDonald and Thomas scarcely meets with sympathy amongst the working masses, who instinctively feel that Baldwin's road is not theirs. But our Left Wing elements, except the Communists, have hitherto not bothered to work out their definite attitude to this burning question of our daily lives.

Only quite recently we were witnesses of a shameful confusion in relation to India. Our ruling classes have succeeded by combining brutal violence with deceptive promises to weaken the Indian nationalist movement, which reached such wide development during the first years after the war. Its present depression takes the shape of terrorist infatuations, on the extreme flank of one side, and in Mr. Das' swing to the Right, on the other. Das obviously is flirting with the militarists. But the same Press organs which have been chastising Thomas for his toast at the Great Western dinner, have been praising Das for his flirtation with Lord Reading ! Saddest of all is that *Lansbury's Weekly* hastened to extol Das, and to enter into bitter controversy with those who, in the *Sunday Worker* and the Communist press, had exposed him. I am not at all inclined to blame Lansbury himself for this. The lines to the greater glory of Das were obviously written by the hand of a renegade : as the French say, *les beaux esprits se rencontrent*—great minds think alike. But it is noteworthy that these lines appeared in the pages of a journal edited by an old and honest fighter in the Labour movement !

The Colonial question must be discussed and considered by us with all the attention it deserves. But the General Council could take the initiative. The Indian Trade Union Congress has selected the Workers' Welfare League of India as its constant representative in Great Britain. Why should not the General Council establish close contact with this organisation ? Surely closer contact with the trade unions of the Colonies opens up very great prospects before us.

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The strength of our enemies is in our divisions. They must be overcome !

Unity of the British Trade Unions

The sway of the old forms of our movement, and of its old ideology, shows itself particularly clearly in the question of national trade union unity. We greet with enthusiasm the steps taken by the General Council towards international unity, and yet at the same time we are powerless to overcome sectional traditions in our own midst. The movement for the revival in a new form of the Triple Alliance, which perished so ingloriously in 1921, is the best proof that our General Council is still hanging in the air. For is not the main purpose of the existence of the General Council just this very task of unifying all the forces of the trade union movement into one powerful army ? Yet it turns out that at a moment of dread danger we need a special *temporary* body, to bring together the forces of the most important trade unions.

But we must look facts in the face. Sectional interests still prevail over industrial, and industrial interests over the interest of our class as a whole. Capital is able to laugh at our *powerful* organisations, which are *helpless* even to organise resistance.

From what has been said it follows that we must wholeheartedly welcome and support the efforts of the miners generally, and of Cook in particular, directed towards the co-ordination of the action of the largest and most influential trade unions. At the same time the movement must give a mandate to the General Council not to drag at the tail of events, and to assume the functions of leadership in this complex task.

But it would be a mistake to over-estimate the possible outcome of this movement. For tens of years the whole work of the trade unions has been concentrated in the hands of more or less permanent executive committees. The activity of the working masses themselves has grown weaker. Yet we are now face to face with serious conflicts and a prolonged and difficult struggle. In a struggle between the trade union apparatus and the apparatus of the ruling classes, victory will inevitably be on the side of the latter. Our strength is in the masses. The politicians suggest that the masses should preserve their energies for the election campaign in

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1929. But we have to act now. Meetings and demonstrations at the present time will not alone be sufficient. Organisations for mass action must be created.

The steps taken by a number of Trades Councils (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Sheffield, Doncaster) to co-ordinate the activity of the menaced unions by summoning special delegate conferences, at which all trade union branches are represented, and which elect Councils of Action, are steps in the right direction. They aim at bringing the necessity of joint struggle home to the workers in the districts. But even more than this is required, if we are to get at the actual masses themselves, the vast majority of workers who do not attend the trade union branches. *The only organisations of mass action can be factory committees, which should be set up on the initiative of the Trades Councils, with the backing of the General Council.*

Trade Unions and the Labour Party

Three immediate tasks have been indicated, all of which are fully within the power of our trade union movement. But the trade union movement has one more piece of machinery—the Labour Party, which received $5\frac{1}{2}$ million votes. It is essential to give some serious consideration to this machinery.

Naïve and sentimental people enthusiastically write about a swing to the Left of the Labour Party. The voices of Kirkwood, Maxton and Lansbury are heard to-day more firmly and sharply than before. The word "Socialism" has begun to appear more frequently in the official speeches of the representatives of the Labour Party. What more do we require? Yet it is sufficient to follow up a single Parliamentary "battle" to become convinced that our Labour Party, in spite of good intentions and sincere outbursts on the part of individual members, represents an organised impotence.

We can begin with the fact that all the attacks of the Labour Party Left Wingers meet with the cynical declaration of the Government: "We are continuing the work of *your* Labour Government." Whether it is a question of India and Egypt, of the Prince of Wales' tour, of the Supplementary Railway Reserve—in all these cases the appropriate Minister refers to his predecessor in the Labour Government. And yet the Labour Party has not uncrowned

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its Government. The leader of that Government remains the leader of the Party.

But the stubborn optimist will not give way. He reminds us that the I.L.P. Annual Conference referred back the section of its Executive's report dealing with the Zinoviev letter. That is so. And yet the same Congress *congratulated* the Labour Government for its achievements. The resolution about the Zinoviev letter is swamped by this resolution. In point of fact, even the Zinoviev letter resolution does not contain any declaration of principle. We now have a Parliament elected with the help of the forged letter. An honest political party of the working class should have demanded: (a) the dissolution of that Parliament ; (b) the bringing to trial of all those who participated in the plot, and who deliberately gave currency to the letter in order to deceive the mass of the people.

Such demands would have political sense, but even the Left elements at the I.L.P. Conference did not go further than a Parliamentary demonstration. But Parliamentary demonstrations augur nothing good for us in the present circumstances, when life demands a serious and rapid revision of old values generally, and particularly of the record of the Labour Government, which hangs as a dead weight round the neck of the British worker. It is sufficient merely to compare the sensation caused by the Zinoviev letter last October with the resolution of the I.L.P. Conference, or the Dawes Report with the speeches by our Left Wing Parliamentarians, to realise all the inadequateness of the action of the Left Wing.

At the same time it is unquestionable that even in the Labour Party we can feel some new tendencies at work. The whole question is, in what measure is it possible to transform these tendencies into the fighting weapon of the working class. And here we come right up against the question of the relations between the trade unions and the Labour Party.

The trade unions are the material and moral support of the Labour Party. But they do not determine the policy of the Labour Party. And the Labour Party has what seems to be a permanent general staff. It is recruited not from the working class, but from the middle-class elements, who yearn after the " pure " Liberalism of Gladstone, and are hostile to the wave of class struggle. This

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general staff has concluded a fairly firm alliance with the old trade union leaders of the Amsterdam school, who have long ago broken off all real connections with the working class, with its struggle and its aspirations. This union, which is best of all symbolised by MacDonald-Thomas, listens very attentively to the Liberal elements within the Labour Party, and to the openly bourgeois elements outside the Labour Party, while it hates and despises Poplarism, strikes, and everything that recalls proletarian life and the working-class struggle. It is most characteristic that the leader of the Labour Party borrowed practically all his arguments against the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Agreement out of *The Times* !

It is obvious that things cannot go on in this way. The trade unions must acquire an influence on the policy of the Labour Party, They should in the first place bring about the withdrawal of the " exceptional laws " adopted against the Communists, and at the same time try to cleanse the Labour Party of lords, bankers, and merchants. The ship of the Labour movement is unable to go forward with the ballast which the Labour Party acquired when it became a pathway towards rank and career.

But this revolution will only be possible if the Left elements in the trade unions conclude a bloc with the Left elements of the Labour Party. The MacDonald-Thomas alliance must be opposed by a Purcell-Maxton alliance. Such a Left bloc must be wide enough to include Swales and Cook, Hicks and Pollitt, Kirkwood and Gallacher, Maxton and Saklatvala, Lansbury and Campbell. I am speaking here of well-known names, but I have in mind principally those splendid, honest and incorruptible fighters of the rank and file who follow them.

We must dwell a little longer on these Left elements.

Our Left front, as I see it, must take some such shape as the following. On the extreme flank stands the Communist Party, which has the advantage of a definite programme and a clear outlook. It is followed by the Minority Movement, which to all appearances is growing, becoming stronger, and attracting new young forces into the orbit of its influence. A little to the right go, side by side, two groups, one representing the Left Wing of the trade union movement, and the other the Left Wing of the Labour Party. All these groups constitute an integral part both of the trade

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unions and of the Labour Party. Acting in unison, these groups might play a decisive part in the work of re-equipping and re-arming our movement.

And the time has come for thinking concretely about such co-ordination. Without it, the trade unions will pay their dues into the Labour Party, the Left elements will make speeches, and MacDonald will utilise the *whole* apparatus to continue the policy of Baldwin, paying very little attention to the fact that the simple-minded trade union leaders will look upon the Labour Party as their apparatus.

Speaking of Left elements, one cannot omit to say a word about the professional deserters, like Newbold, Postgate, &c. These figures are most dangerous of all at critical moments. Of course, their danger depends on their talents and their methods. A man who for several months proclaims MacDonald to be "Morgan's Bootblack," and then calls him "my leader" (Newbold), is least dangerous. He is ridiculous. But men like Postgate, who are "devoted to the cause of the Workers' Revolution" (see his declaration in the May *Plebs*), are always harmful. The consolidation of our movement, its political and moral crystallisation, will naturally lead to the result that these figures will remain the length of a gunshot away from our movement. But even for this purpose it is essential that the trade unions should cease to be the formal masters of the Labour Party, and that they should become the deciding factors in the determination of its policy.

The Press

I have attempted to sketch those tasks which seem to me immediate. My short outline would be incomplete if I did not mention the Labour press.

According to the incomplete figures of the *Labour Year Book* for 1924, the Sunday press has a circulation of 9,162,097 copies. Against these figures we have only the youthful *Sunday Worker*, with a circulation of about 100,000. The daily morning press, —I am referring only to the larger papers—has a circulation of 6,562,388 copies. Against this we have only the *Daily Herald*, with a circulation of under 400,000. These figures alone speak for the seriousness of our problem. I understand that the press is one

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of the weapons of the bourgeois dictatorship, and under capitalism we cannot hope to rival the ruling classes in this sphere. But I doubt whether we have done everything possible even partially to weaken the power of the moneybags.

It is a secret to no one that many capitalist papers show enormous profits from advertisements. In the distribution of advertisements a great part is played by the press department of the Federation of British Industries. Our movement numbers over four million organised workers, *i.e.*, a very large number of the consumers on whom advertisements depend to a certain extent (we know that to a very great extent the advertisements serve the political purpose of strengthening the capitalist press). As far as I know, we have not made really serious attempts to materialise the power of our organisations for strengthening and increasing the circulation of our press. Yet this is essential. In the hands of the bourgeoisie, which is forced to have recourse to democratic appearances, the press is a mighty instrument. We are helpless to tear that instrument from their hands. But we must do everything to weaken the monstrous power of that steam-hammer which day by day so savagely hits the worker over the head.

Working on the strengthening of our press, we must have a care that it is adapted to the requirements of the Labour movement. The *Daily Herald*, for example, sees its tasks as an official organ in praising the recognised leaders and saying nothing about the movement of the masses, which alone can create a militant Labour press. And yet it is just now in particular that we require a press which would listen attentively to the voice of the masses, and which would assist them to re-equip themselves as easily as possible for the coming battles.

We are reprinting, immediately, in pamphlet form, the above article by P. Braun, "Problems of the Labour Movement," Price 3d. for single copies, or 2s. 3d. a dozen, post paid.

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THE RED "PLOTS"

By W. N. EWER

(*Since this is in some measure a prophetic article, I think I should note that it was written on May 8 and 9. For before it is published events may have outstripped calculation, and turned my prophecies either into fact or into nonsense.*)

POLITICAL meteorology is a fascinating study rather than an exact science. Yet, in politics as in the weather, there are certain indications, storm-signals which presage trouble as plainly as "mare's tail" clouds presage wind. And to those who are watching the political sky carefully there are to-day many signs which seem to forebode stormy weather in Anglo-Russian relations. There is an atmospheric similarity between these days and the days which preceded the launching of the Curzon ultimatum.

For a little while after the coming to power of the Conservative Government there were no signs visible in this country. Only those who knew that—despite official denials—Mr. Chamberlain had tried at Rome to organise an anti-Soviet Balkan bloc were able adequately to discount both assurances that the British Government hoped for the continuance and development of friendly relations, and rumours that treaty negotiations were to be resumed.

It was in February that the indications—at first faint, then more definite—of new developments began to be visible. The first of them was the cancellation of the Arcos advertisements in Government publications. Then came the furious anger of the Capitalist Press at the Trades Union Congress Delegation's Report: and then in March, the Conservative Press began to open its new campaign against "Red Plotting in Britain."

The Russian Trade Union Delegation was denounced vehemently as a gang of conspirators; the Conference was merely a camouflage for their mysterious and felonious plots. They were attacked in the Press and in Parliament; they were spied upon by Scotland Yard; the Home Secretary hinted that he might "take action" against them.

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One by one the old stock stories were taken down from their pigeon holes and produced day by day in the columns of *The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Morning Post* and the *Daily Mail*. Day after day their readers were told of the activities of mysterious red envoys who had, by means of forged passports, contrived to enter the country. There were reports of secret Communist conferences attended by disguised agents of the Comintern. The myth—which the Government itself was later forced, however reluctantly, to explode—was freely promulgated, that a large number of Bolshevist propagandists had been brought in as members of the Embassy staff enjoying full diplomatic immunity. Accusations were made of the smuggling of literature in the diplomatic despatch bags.

And then that old familiar feature of such campaigns re-appeared. The "Zinoviev letter" had been so dramatically successful that it would, perhaps, have been beyond human nature to refrain from repeating the experiment. So the products of the Berlin forgery-factories began again to find place in the columns of the Tory Press; though the Foreign Office, learning at last from past unhappy experiences that clumsy forgeries are dangerous weapons to handle, refrained this time from making use of them. The "Zinoviev letter" had been a success, but only by luck. There was a nervous realisation that the triumph might easily have been a disaster, and there was a still rankling memory of how Lord Curzon had made himself and the Foreign Office alike ridiculous by that astonishing note of 1921, with its stern protests based upon forged "evidence" of which the nature should have been obvious to any schoolboy with a turn for criticism. Moreover, it was still far too early, whatever the intention for the future, for any Foreign Office action.

But the Press campaign went ahead. And though much of it no doubt sprang from heated editorial imaginations, one noted uneasily that a large proportion of the stories came from quarters which have notoriously good "official contacts."

The Sofia bomb outrage came as a heaven-sent opportunity. During the week-end there was sanity. Both the *Observer* and the *Sunday Times* analysed the possibilities fairly and coolly. But from the Monday onwards the Tory Press—joined a few days later by

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the Liberals—broke into full cry of denunciation of the Red Plot. There was no waiting for proof or even for evidence; there was no reference, or scarcely any reference, to the first Bulgarian allegations that the conspirators were the agrarian emigrés in Serbia, who had been supported by and were to be shielded by the Belgrade Government. There was neither inquiry nor hesitation. This was beyond doubt the Red Hand of Zinoviev. This was what he was plotting to do in London. Rakovsky and all his staff were in the plot. "Clear them out," screamed the *Daily Mail*, supported by the heavier voices of the twopenny Press.

The headlines of those days are a study. "Moscow's plans for Revolution," "Bolshevist Army in England," "The Red Peril Here," "Armed Revolution Favoured," are fair examples.

The *Daily Mail*, after its fashion, lost its head, and nearly turned the whole thing to laughter by announcing that St. Margaret's, Westminster, had been searched for bombs on the eve of Lord Rawlinson's funeral. Sir Wyndham Childs himself had to telephone round Fleet Street next day to implore the papers not to make Scotland Yard more ridiculous than ever by repeating the absurdity.

Hard on the St. Margaret's story came that other masterpiece —the plot against Mr. Chamberlain's life. A foreign legation—let it remain anonymous since it could not very well have acted otherwise—got hold of a Vienna rumour of a plan to assassinate the Foreign Secretary. It, naturally enough, passed it on to the Foreign Office, which passed it to the Yard, which (probably yawning) pigeon-holed it with a hundred other such yarns. But an over-zealous official, with an under-developed sense of the ridiculous, handed the story, with suitable embellishments, to a news agency. But it was too much even for editorial credulity. Even the *Star* and the *Evening News* were hesitant in their headlines. And the *Morning Post* next day was reduced to announcing that the whole story was without foundation. Mr. Chamberlain, it seems, was distinctly annoyed.

Another gentleman who was very worried was the Austrian Minister. For the fact that the rumour had come from Vienna helped on a subsidiary, but very significant, part of the campaign. The Western Governments have for a long time been annoyed with

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the Austrian Government because it has allowed a certain amount of international Communist activity—notably the publication of the *International Press Correspondence*—to be carried on in Vienna. Pressure had been brought to bear once or twice before, and the Austrian Government had been forced to expel Communists whose presence in Vienna was distasteful to other Governments. But now the pressure was being redoubled. Representations were made by the Foreign Office. Press articles denounced Vienna as "a second Moscow." The Austrian Government made valiant efforts to "clean its skirts." Assurances were given in Downing Street. Denials were sent to the Press. The Chief of the Austrian Police contrived to see Malone and Mackinder as they came home through Vienna and to give them an interview explaining how careful an eye he kept on Communists. Only—he was a little indiscreet when he told them that the police departments of all Europe were preparing an anti-Communist drive in concert.

The significant sequel is preparing as I am writing. On the proposal of the Serbian Foreign Minister the Little Entente will probably send a note to Austria demanding the expulsion of all foreigners belonging either to Communist Parties or to Balkan revolutionary organisations. And it is reported that M. Nintchitch is doing this at the suggestion of a Great Power. Which Great Power is a riddle not difficult to solve.

But to return to this country. This evidently organised Press campaign, swelling both in volume and in intensity as the weeks went by, had a slight boomerang effect. Tangled nerves began to ask why, if all this plotting was going on under his nose, the Home Secretary was doing nothing.

Here came the test. Unless, for some ulterior purpose of its own, the Government wanted the campaign to continue, wanted an atmosphere of alarm and of Russophobia created, Sir William Joynson-Hicks' course was clear. One honest statement from him and the whole thing would collapse, leaving the old ladies to sleep soundly without fears that they might wake up one morning and find themselves nationalised.

I have not the least hesitation in saying that the Home Secretary knows perfectly well that the whole thing is bunk, that he knows perfectly well that Scotland Yard, for all its pertinacious activity,

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has never found a scrap of evidence of a plot; that its associates, the British Fascisti, have never found any such evidence; that its spies in the Communist Party have never found any such evidence: in short that there isn't any evidence because there isn't any Plot.

Sir William, I say, could have spoken out frankly and truthfully and killed the whole mischievous business in a single sentence. But Sir William did nothing of the kind. Instead he deliberately, by hints and innuendoes, supported the Press campaign.

First to the Primrose League and then in an interview in the *Sunday Times*, he announced that he knew far more than he proposed to tell, that he "received daily reports of Communist activities," that he was "fully cognisant of the state of affairs," that he was taking all necessary steps, and that he would act when the time came. In an answer to a Parliamentary question he went so far as to suggest that there was truth in the fantastic tale—which even the *Morning Post* had been driven to deny—of the plot to assassinate Mr. Chamberlain.

That was the acid test. The Home Secretary made it perfectly clear that he did not want to tell the truth because he did not want the anti-Bolshevik Press campaign damped down. The Home Secretary, one is bound to assume, speaks for the Government. And if the British Government does not want such a venomous campaign against a foreign government stopped, one can only conclude that it is itself a party to the campaign, which is designed to further its own policy.

Now if that be so, and there can be little room for doubt that it is so; if this hectic anti-Russian Press campaign is being carried on under the direct inspiration or, at the least, with the connivance and tacit approval of the Government, what does it signify? It is clearly, as such things always are, a preparation—but for what?

One thinks immediately of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Agreement. For over and over again, with an insistence which is clearly not accidental, leading articles which have opened by deploring the Sofia explosion or by protesting against the diplomatic immunity enjoyed by Rakovsky and his colleagues, have ended by denouncing the Agreement as a danger both to the British Unions and to the I.F.T.U. The solicitude of the Tory and Liberal Press for the welfare of the Amsterdam International is singularly

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touching. It arouses in some leader writers enthusiasms so strong that, under the emotional stress, they confuse the I.F.T.U. with the Labour and Socialist International.

Evidently then one of the objects of the plotmongers is to stir up opposition to the Trade Union Treaty. And that is, equally evidently, a sound tactical move. For sharp hostility to the Treaty, expressed by a considerable section, might mean a stiff fight in Congress next September, with resultant divisions and dissensions in the movement. And that would be of very material assistance to the employers in the industrial conflicts which are ahead.

It may well be, therefore, that one of the purposes of this Red Plot Stunt is to divide, at a critical juncture, both the political and the industrial sides of the Labour movement by stirring up a quarrel between pro-Soviet and anti-Soviet groups.

But this, I fancy, is merely a subsidiary calculation. The sources of the majority of the plot propaganda suggest very strongly that its motive must be sought rather in the foreign than in the domestic sphere, and that, if it is a preparation for some move, that move is diplomatic rather than industrial. I see, in short, no reason whatever for rejecting the most obvious conclusion of all—that a new move against the Soviet Union is in preparation.

Whatever assurances may be given to the contrary one is forced to assume that a British Conservative Government must, of its very nature, be intensely hostile to the Soviet Government. There are twin reasons for such hostility. As Conservatives, British Tories detest the Socialist Republic and realise that its successful development is the gravest of all menaces to their own power. As Imperialists they dread the great republican State whose territories so nearly march with those of the Eastern Empire which they are trying forcibly to hold and to exploit. The geographical relations of Britain and the Soviet Union are such that between them there can only be either the most cordial of understandings or the most decisive hostility. But between a Tory Government and a Communist Government there is no possibility of cordial understanding.

Hostility then must be taken for granted. And the primary task of British diplomacy under a Tory regime must necessarily be to weaken the Soviet Government, to form coalitions against it, to stimulate hostility towards it, so to trouble it on its Western

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borders that it is reduced to inaction and impotence in the South Asiatic borderlands.

Along those lines Mr. Chamberlain's diplomacy has already been quietly working. The attempt to procure the formation of an anti-Soviet Balkan bloc broke down. Mr. Chamberlain, as I warned him, was venturing into a tangle which he did not understand. Mr. Lieper's activities at Riga seem to have been a little more successful, though Poland has shown a disappointing reluctance to tie herself up with the minor Baltic States for the benefit of Great Britain's Asiatic diplomacy. The Five Power Pact, of which one of the chief objects was to "cut the wire" between Berlin and Moscow by making Germany feel herself once more an accepted member of Western European society, is in a bad way. But the election of Hindenburg is regarded as reassuring. And, most satisfactory of all, the strong movement in the United States towards recognition has, for the moment, been checked.

Hostility to Russia is, in fact, even where not visible on the surface, the chief underrunning theme of the Chamberlain diplomacy. And it is, I think, as an integral part of that diplomacy that we must regard the Red Plot Stunt. In a period of apparent quiescence—which has been in fact a period of intense underground activity—this Press campaign is the first plainly visible warning of what is afoot. It is—unless all deduction from previous experience is fallacious—the preparation of "public opinion" for some open diplomatic move.

The parallel of the weeks before the Curzon ultimatum again comes to mind. Is a new ultimatum being even now prepared by the Foreign Office? Are suggestions being made to other Powers for a joint note to Moscow? Are the diplomats preparing such a stroke as an insistent request, under pain of boycott, that the Communist International shall be either dissolved or banished from the Soviet Union? The details may be matter for speculation. But all the signs seem to indicate that something of the sort is in preparation, that a new and vigorous diplomatic offensive against the Soviet Republics will be launched during the summer months.

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THE NEW WAR IN MOROCCO

By JACQUES DORIOT

(Communist Member of the French Chamber of Deputies)

[THE LABOUR MONTHLY *is privileged to present to its readers this article on the Moroccan situation, specially written by Jacques Doriot, whose powerful speeches in the French Chamber in defence of the peoples of Morocco against imperialist attacks and exploitation have created a great sensation in France.*

Jacques Doriot, who is an engineer by trade, is the most prominent young figure in the French Communist movement. As General Secretary of the French Young Communist League, his persistent anti-militarist propaganda led to his imprisonment. He was still in jail at the time of the General Election in France, in May, 1924: but his election by a big majority as Communist Deputy for one of the working-class constituencies of Paris secured, after slight delay, his release.]

WAR has broken out again in Morocco with considerable fierceness. Riffs and French are now at grips. The war which Marshal Lyautey has just started will not be as easy as the former ones. It is a modern war. He is no longer faced by Arabs armed with flint-lock muskets against whom he can employ aeroplanes, but by Riffs who possess artillery, machine guns, tanks and even aeroplanes. Moreover they are inspired by the proud memory of the victory which freed them from the Spaniards and they have the moral and financial support of the whole world of Islam. Lyautey has a tough job before him. The chief of the Riff Republic is an adversary to be reckoned with.

The development of events does not surprise us. We have foreseen and denounced it. For several months the whole French Press has been creating a warlike atmosphere. To-day it throws the responsibility for the war on the Riffs.

Let us examine the facts. After his victory over Spain, Abd-el-Krim laid down the general lines of the policy of the Riff Republic. The evacuation of Riff territory and of Spanish Morocco by the

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armies of Primo de Rivera ; the right of self-determination for the Riff people ; peace with the neighbouring States, particularly with France. From November to February he repeated to journalists of all countries, French, English and American, his desire to negotiate amicably with France. He wrote to Lyautey, to Muley Youssef, Sultan of Morocco, to assure them of his peaceful intentions. They did not deign to reply. Why ? *L'Information*[1] tells us : " According to all the documents which make the actual position of Morocco in international law so complicated (that is to say the Treaties of 1912 which divide Morocco into two spheres of influence : one French and the other Spanish, without consulting the people of Morocco) *Abd-el-Krim has no diplomatic existence.*[2] With whom can we negotiate ? "

French diplomacy ignores a people which has won its freedom and set up its Republic when this people proposes peace and friendly relations. Lyautey and the imperialist Press which he controls understood this perfectly. To each peaceful proposal of Abd-el-Krim this journalistic rabble replied by warmongering pronouncements. *L'Oeuvre*[3] and the *Matin*[4] distinguished themselves in this business. Lyautey himself added unequivocal declarations " on the Riff anarchy, which must be brought to an end."

He did not stop there. The Treaties of 1912 officially separated the valley of the Ouergha from the Riff, that is to say the Riff country, which is rich in minerals, but poor from an agricultural point of view, from its natural granary.

Lyautey recognised the " political and juridical " necessity of starving the Riffs. He commenced the blockade.

For the past year Lyautey has been working to prepare war. The *Petit Parisien* admits it : " Last year the French line had been advanced six miles without a blow being struck, a clever political preparation having prepared the way for the military advance."

Then this year he re-established the blockade by setting against the Riffs, by means of his agent the Derkaui, the tribe of Neni

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[1] One of the best-informed political and financial organs of the Paris capitalist Press.

[2] The italics are ours. — J. D.

The *Manchester Guardian* of France; an ardent supporter of the *Bloc des Gauches*.

[4] Perhaps the most notorious of the Paris " gutter " Press.

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Zeroual, who live in the Ouergha Valley and consequently held up food supplies.

The Riffs have the right to eat. They occupied the Ouergha. It was the moment that Lyautey had waited for to start the war. Had not the *Bloc des Gauches* promised him financial and military support? Had not the Socialists shown by their scandalous abstention that they were ready to excuse all the actions of the Moroccan adventurer? All these facts show clearly *that it is French imperialism which is responsible for the Riff war.* They wish to overthrow the Riff Republic for the profit of the French banking consortium. Slaughter is to start again in Morocco. The war will be long and deadly.

It will not stop as is apparently suggested at the Riff frontier. From now onwards Lyautey means to penetrate into the Riff territory. The most imperialist papers advise him to do so. Our Anglophobes, and they are many, are even casting their eyes on Gibraltar and desire to secure by military successes the revision of the existing international agreements and to make Tangier a French town.

The Riff war, like the former conquest of Morocco, is going to complicate the international situation. Italy, wishing to annex Tunis, is already showing her teeth. England, nervous about Gibraltar, divides her favours between France and the Riffs. Spain, defeated, but still ambitious, will willingly allow the Riffs to be beaten but will protest against the occupation of the Spanish zone by the troops of the *Bloc des Gauches*. This war is not only dangerous in itself, because of the lives it will cost the workers, but still more because of the imperialist bargaining that it brings in its wake and the conflicts that it may provoke between the great imperialist Powers.

Faced with this terrible danger the French working-class must act swiftly and firmly, more solid than ever in support of the Riffs who have been basely provoked to war.

They must force French imperialism to conclude the immediate peace, asked for and desired by the Riffs. They must demand that the Riff Republic be recognised and respected. They must support this young movement of liberation. They must request and enforce the immediate evacuation of Morocco, the grave of the workers' children and of millions of their money.

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THE GREAT RETREAT

(Germany, 1918-1925)

By M. PHILIPS PRICE

SOME years ago a German Social-Democrat wrote a book which is now out of print on the relations between a political party organisation and the individual members of that party. He was living latterly in Italy and under those conditions was able to see as others saw the process of bureaucratisation that was going on at great speed in the German Social-Democratic Party. As Nietzsche pictured the super-man, so this author foresaw the coming of the super-party. He saw the principles and objects for which the party was founded, and for which it had fought many a hard fight and established many a noble tradition, becoming subjected to the instinct of preserving the apparatus of the party, which had been built up with such care and which might be endangered by boldly facing a critical situation. And so the human machine which worked the party would tend to become an entity in itself—above the party and ultimately to dictate policy, irrespective of old traditions or ideals.

There is no doubt that much of what has happened in Germany since the Armistice is due to a failure of this kind on the part of the great Social-Democratic Party, the pillar of the old International, the party of August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, of Kautsky, Bernstein and Mehring, and of some of the finest thinkers on social and economic theory that last century produced. The tragedy of that failure is all the greater when one remembers that revolutionary situations come and go and once they are let slip by social decay is liable to set in, until some fresh incentive is derived from some other part of the world. How far was the failure to derive any benefit for the masses in Germany out of the situation which arose by the collapse of the Hohenzollern state due to factors outside Germany, and how far was it due to the moral breakdown of the German Social-Democratic Party at the critical moment, it is impossible to weigh up exactly. One is at once up against the

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problem of the rôle of personalities in controlling mass movements, and it is justifiable to argue that with a counsel of perfection in the offices of the *Vorwaerts* and of the S.P.D. the events of 1919 and of subsequent years would not have been greatly affected. On the other hand it is equally conceivable that even with a Germany blockaded by the Allies, cut off from Soviet Russia, and on her uppers as far as food and raw material was concerned, it might have been possible to face the Allies with nationalised heavy industries, controlled banks, and a State monopoly of foreign trade. With a readiness to pay some reparations it might then have been possible to dare the Allies to reject this offer and to advance on Berlin in the face of their own working-class movements at home. Germany would not have become at one blow a Socialist republic. She might have still nominally retained the Reichstag with a bourgeois majority, controlled by workers' councils. Her social system would not have been in any case less advanced along the road to full Socialism than that of the Soviet Union to-day. But it would have been an important step in that direction and it would have created interesting repercussions in the rest of Europe. There is no doubt that the ruling classes in this country during the winter of 1918-19 were in a very nervous state over the condition of Central Europe. If there had been a leadership in a Social-Democratic party that was prepared to risk something with a fair chance of success, Germany might by this time have escaped the fate of becoming the Profiteer Republic of Central Europe, and although it might be still burdened with a Dawes plan, which it could not shake off without help from outside, it would at least have distributed the burden of that plan more equitably than at present.

But the requisite personalities were absent at the Lindenstrasse and the mass mind, which was prepared for a vigorous lead, was allowed to feed only on the paper promises of the Weimar constitution, in return for which it was induced to give up the real positions of industrial power which it had won in the opening days of the Revolution. This great retreat from strategical key positions was begun on the very morrow of the abdication of the Kaiser. At this moment Kautsky jumped into the breach and declared that anyone who advocated nationalisation of industry or control of credit in the conditions in which Germany found herself then, with

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disorganised factories, insufficient transport, depreciated currency, lack of capital and half-famished population, "would be turning Germany into a mad-house." Another Social-Democratic leader, Adolf Cohen, said: "The workers could not suffer a greater misfortune than that the capitalist class should even for one day hand over to them the key to economic power, before it is ready." And Scheidemann clapped the crown on this shameless desertion from duty by declaring: "We cannot nationalise debts." Working on this assumption, therefore, that when capitalism has hurled its own masses into a war and encompassed its own ruin it is the duty of a Socialist to set up the profit-making machine once more and then turn round and ask it to allow itself to be nationalised, the *Vorwaerts* began on the very first day of the Revolution to assure the German middle classes that "for nationalisation of industry it is necessary to have a properly constituted State, which we have not got at the present time." (December 5, 1918.)

That the psychological goundwork was there for a beginning of nationalisation in Germany at this time is seen in a new work which has just appeared in Germany on the history of the German Revolution, *Vom Kaiserreich Zur Republik*, by Richard Mueller, the Social-Democratic chairman of the Berlin Workers' Council in those days. In Volume II, page 107, he writes: "A large part of the intellectuals, technicians, engineers, chemists, architects, and doctors were in the first months of the Revolution ready to work with us (the manual workers) . . . In the conference which I presided over in December with these brain workers their readiness to co-operate in this new political and industrial order was clearly shown. There were many who up to the Revolution had had no contact with the manual workers, but who now, although they regarded the Revolution as the work of the manual workers, were glad to transfer their activities from assistance of profit-making for private interests to that of the common weal . . . But this could only happen if the political and industrial organs, thrown up by the Revolution, took the initiative." But what happened? Mueller describes how his Workers' Council of Berlin worked out plans for the control of the industries of that city with the aid of the technical and clerical staffs, whereby there would have been no drop in production, no flight of capital through control of the books, fair

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rationing of raw material, and control of prices. The committees were there and—" our Social-Democratic Trade Union leaders protested ; they had already signed an agreement with the employers, which was neither known to us nor to the public." Mueller describes (Vol. II, page 112) how Dr. Reichert, the Secretary of the German Iron and Steel Union, told at a meeting of the Westfalian Chamber of Commerce in December, 1918, how his organisation had come to an agreement with the German Trade Union leaders not to allow any workers' control over the employers or insight into their financial transactions, in return for which the workers should get the eight-hour day ! One may be permitted to ask after six years, where are the fruits of that agreement to-day ?

But perhaps we are unjust to the Social-Democratic leaders. Perhaps the Allies were threatening the new German government that if it made any Socialistic experiments, they would refuse to send in any fats and meat for the hungry urban population. Certainly the Allied governments were nervous, but were they prepared to go back on that clause of the Armistice which bound them to allow food to pass into Germany to prevent starvation ? On the contrary they were interested and did in fact press President Wilson to pour food into Hamburg and Bremen in order to stifle the threatening Revolution with rancid American fats and bacon ! And yet the *Vorwaerts*, on November 21, got someone to telegraph to it from Holland that " the food which has been obtained abroad for Germany is being held back by the American government, because it is not certain if Germany can guarantee that she will have a free constitution and undertake the fair distribution of the food among the population." On December 11, this was denied by Reuter from Washington. Mueller also gives the wording of a telegram (Vol. II, page 118) from Ebert to the American government, asking for food to be sent to Germany, " provided that public order prevails there." The press correspondence of the Social-Democratic Party thereupon announced to the world that Germany would only get food if it ceased to make Bolshevistic experiments ! Whereupon the *Temps*, of November 16, wrote: " The conditions which President Wilson put for the supply of food to Germany did not come from him but *were suggested to him by the German Chancellor (Ebert) himself*" (my italics). It was left

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to an honest capitalist paper, the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, to announce through its Geneva correspondent that: "In actual fact M. Clemenceau is quite indifferent to what form of government there is in Germany, whether it is capitalistic or Socialistic, if Liebknecht is crowned Kaiser in Prussia or Prince Henry is elected President of the Republic in Kiel." It is, therefore, not possible to pretend that Germany could not have taken some steps towards Socialism, because of the threats of starvation by the Allies during these months. The real obstacle lay, as can now be indisputably proved, in Germany itself and not least of all in the Social-Democratic Party.

It is not necessary to relate the long story of this obstruction of Socialistic effort and of the dismal retreat which has gone on from that day to this and has ended in the support of the capitalist Republican, Marx, against a victorious Monarchist general in the Presidential elections last month. I have dealt specially with these particular facts in the earliest days of the November Revolution, because they have only recently come to light in full detail in the disclosures of Richard Mueller, who had access to all the documents of the workers' councils throughout Germany at this time. But the whole history of subsequent years is strewn with similar cases. The entry of the Social-Democrats into the Government with the Liberal Democrats and the Catholic Centre in the Weimar coalition from 1919 to 1920 was made without any guarantee for the introduction of Socialistic measures. The masses were given the Weimar Constitution and other political rights and one important industrial measure, the "Workers' Council Law," which, however, was soon shown to have little value because the final control rested with the employers and strict secrecy was exacted from the workers' delegates.

In 1920 one of the worst stabs in the back ever delivered to the German Labour Movement was made when the Social-Democratic coalition government allowed itself to be saved from the Kapp rebels by the "Red Army" on the Ruhr, and after it had settled its quarrel with Kapp used the rebels to put down and massacre the Ruhr miners, the very people who had saved it. After that the miners had a sop thrown to them in the Socialisation Commission which was going to report in favour of nationalisation and legislation was to follow. But the Commission when it did report burked the issue and, anyhow, there was no parliamentary majority. The time

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had gone by ; the industrial power had been allowed to slip from the hands of the workers and the Social-Democratic Party was impotent. In the winter of 1921-22 the heavy industries, led by Stinnes, began their offensive. Their aim was the abolition of the eight-hour day, the price of the Social-Democratic undertaking not to attempt " Socialistic experiments," and the de-nationalisation of the German State railways to be held by the German trusts in pawn for reparations to the Allies. There was a public counter-demand for the State Mortgage on Industry (*Erfassung der Sachwerte*), as a reply to this offensive. The Social-Democratic leaders evaded the crisis by inducing the trusts to abandon their demands on condition that they abandoned theirs. Stagnation remained throughout 1922. The crises over the Rathenau and other murders were only superficial political crises and did not affect the general trend of events in Germany. It was the oncoming struggle between the French and German heavy industry over the control of the coke-production of the Ruhr that shook the German Republic to its foundations and created, during the inflation wave, following on the passive resistance of the Cuno government, a new revolutionary situation, which might have led to a new push in the direction of Socialism. In this crisis of the summer and autumn of 1923 the Social-Democratic leaders followed in the wake of the national capitalistic groups. The *Vorwaerts* editors, led by Stampfer, played second fiddle to Stinnes and used all the slogans of the German Nationalists to rouse the German masses to patriotic resistance. No word of explanation ever appeared in its columns about the real industrial nature of this struggle between two capitalist groups. The *Vorwaerts* report of shootings at Krupps in April, 1923, was a case in point. No working class solution was ever sought for this Gordian Knot. On the other hand another group round Dr. Breitscheid showed a Francophil tendency, but also eschewed the working-class solution. Nor did the Communist Party do any better. In the midst of the crisis, Karl Radek let loose his famous Schlageter speech, extolling this notorious Pan-German wastrel and sending up throughout Germany a Nationalist-Communist stink which reached to heaven. Good work was done by the *Rote Fahne* under Thalheimer's and Brandler's control during the summer and autumn of 1923 in showing up the true

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economic causes of the Ruhr fight, but it was insufficient to prepare the mass mind of Germany for a new Socialist push. Abortive risings of the Left and Right, in Saxony and Munich, were defeated by the capitalist parties of the Centre under the military dictatorship of Von Seeckt and the way prepared for the Dawes plan. The Social-Democratic leaders could not have prevented the application of this plan to Germany, but like MacDonald in England, they might have shown the masses the real nature of this plan to stabilise the European currencies in the interest of the American gold reserves. This they both failed to do. The last stage of the retreat has been spectacular but has little real meaning as it is merely an outward sign of what has been for a long time an economic fact. The election of Hindenburg[1] is merely the hoisting of the colours of the joint dictatorship of junkers, heavy industry and banks in alliance with Anglo-American finance. Once again the Social-Democratic leaders tried to make a political issue of it, and raising the cry : "the Republic in danger," allied themselves with the Catholic and Liberal Centre and—were beaten.

This is the record of the great retreat since the Armistice. But it would be untrue to say that the rank and file of the German Social-Democratic Party are happy at what has happened or that they do not see to what their leaders have led them. There is a healthy recognition of the fact that an aristocracy has risen up during the last ten years in the party and has entrenched itself inside the party apparatus, has acquired vested economic interest in that machine and unconsciously regards the principle of the party as a secondary consideration. The same thing has happened to the German Social-Democratic Party as is happening rather more recently to the Russian Communist Party. In the words of Max Eastman: "a bureaucratic aristocracy is actually solidifying within the Communist Party." But in the case of the German Social-Democratic Party no Trotsky has arisen as yet to fight it. Upon whether a Trotsky arises in the near future depends the fate of the party of Bebel, Liebknecht and Mehring. Failing this, retreat will turn into rout and rout into dissolution.

[1] For the election figures, see THE LABOUR MONTHLY, May, 1925, Vol. 7, No. 5, pp. 311-312.

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THE I.L.P.—PAST AND PRESENT

By MARGARET COLE

THE Independent Labour Party, like the other Socialist organisations of Great Britain, was born in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Its birth, that is, coincided roughly with the beginnings of imperialist capitalism, when the mid-century prosperity of the craftsman was ceasing to fulfil the aspirations of the working classes, and all around a conviction was growing that capitalism, for the majority of the workers, meant much the same as it did in the days of the industrial revolution. Within fifteen years came into existence both the "New Unions" of the underpaid, with fighting demands and a strike policy, and Socialist societies calling for a new world in the phrases of Owen and Marx. The chief of these societies were the Social-Democratic Federation, the Fabian Society, and the Independent Labour Party, the last-named, which was destined completely to overshadow the other two, being also the latest born.

The Social-Democrats, the revolutionary party, had a brief importance only. Capitalism was still far too prosperous to make a revolutionary policy practical in Britain. It could afford to yield to the workers a good many concessions in the way of shorter hours, increased wages, and industrial legislation; and a party which called all these things "palliatives" was not likely to collect many adherents among the working-class. The Social-Democrats degenerated from the ideals of William Morris into a squabbling clique. There remained the Fabian Society, and the I.L.P.

The ideals of these two bodies were much the same. They both aimed at a Socialism of the vaguest possible type, the elimination of private profit and the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange—"plain Socialism," in fact, with no frills. They were both constitutional, that is to say, they proposed to achieve their object without violent dislocation of the existing order. Where they differed was in method. The Fabians proposed a

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definite strategy. They would make a Fabian State by insinuating Fabians into the key positions in the Government and local Government services and by insensibly " permeating " with Fabian ideals the persons chiefly responsible for the conduct of British affairs. Then the world would one day wake up to find that Great Britain had been secretly made Socialist. The I.L.P. had no definite plan, except to make everybody a Socialist. When that was done, Socialism would supervene as a matter of course, nobody quite knew how. In the meantime, it was of course advisable to get Socialist candidates into Parliament and Municipal Councils.

The Fabians had the advantage of a perfectly definite and practical plan of campaign. This, together with the talents and energy of the principal Fabian leaders, explains the great influence of the Fabian Society in the early Labour Party. The only disadvantage was that the plan, like so many other practical plans, turned out to be quite impossible. The economic history of the world would not stand still while the Fabians were carrying out their plan, and as fast as they slipped Fabians into the key positions of capitalism, capitalism claimed them for its own. " The Webb's young men " became a bye-word for efficient administrators of the capitalist system. Fabianism, furthermore, was essentially the creed of a small middle-class group. " Key positions," in the Fabian sense, could only be occupied by trained members of the bourgeoisie, and the working-class had no function other than to do what it was told by its own Fabian-trained officials—hence the Webbs' great admiration for the examination system enforced upon officials of the cotton trade. The lack of an historic sense, which might have suggested that working-class associations had other purposes, was the great error in the Fabian philosophy. We may put the result concretely by saying that the chief permanent memorial of the Fabian Society is—the Insurance Acts.

The Fabians regarded the working-class as figures on a piece of paper, the I.L.P. at any rate regarded them as voters and potential propagandists. So from the very first the I.L.P. membership among the working classes was many times as great as that of the Fabian Society. But this was not due to any conscious class feeling, but simply to the fact that at the time of its formation few, except the working classes, were interested in a Labour political party.

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Anybody might, however, come in; the Socialism of the I.L.P., in fact, looked forward to a Utopia in which everybody, more or less, would be an I.L.P.'er.

These three facts—the absence of a class basis, or of a definite strategy, and the possession of exceedingly broad Socialist principles—drove the I.L.P. from the very first to rely mainly upon its leaders, both to direct its action and to formulate its faith. To understand the history of the I.L.P., it is important to realise its dependence upon its heroes. From Keir Hardie to Clifford Allen, the policy of the I.L.P. has been as its heroes have made it, and they have been venerated with an earnestness ranging from steady loyalty to unqualified sentimentalism. At the same time, the broad basis has allowed of the inclusion, at one time and another, in I.L.P. tenets, of many matters which had no particular connection with Socialism, and only got in under the slightly confused impression that a person who held advanced political views ought also to hold what was accepted as an advanced view upon everything else. An I.L.P.'er had a tendency to be also a vegetarian, a temperance advocate, an anti-vaccinationist, an opponent of capital punishment, &c., &c. Chief of these advanced theories was pacifism, and, as the early leaders of the I.L.P. were mostly ardent pacifists, the I.L.P. as a whole took up an anti-war position. This also is important in view of later developments.

At the end of the century, then, the I.L.P. was a pacifist, broad-Socialist body, with a devoted loyalty to its personal leaders, which ran Parliamentary candidates as a form of propaganda rather than because it had any high hopes of their success. But at this time its leaders conceived the idea of becoming a left-wing political party on a large scale. With the rather unwilling aid of the Fabian Society they persuaded the Trade Unions not merely to take to politics, but also, by a stroke which, whether designed or no, was certainly brilliant, to undertake the principal burden of financing the new Labour Party. Opportunely, the Taff Vale Judgment in 1902 served to convince the Unions that their move into politics had been badly needed.

But, in spite of the Labour Party, the Trade Unions were not by any means I.L.P. The Trade Union leaders of 1900-1910 had grown up in the class-collaborationist period of the preceding

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century ; they had no particular ambition to be a large independent political party ; many of them were not Socialists even in the broadest sense ; and they were certainly not pacifists nor converted to all the fads which the advanced politicians had picked up by the wayside. So in the new Labour Party the I.L.P. representatives still appeared to be to the left of the Trade Unionists ; though in the years immediately before the war, when the industrial workers, tricked and deceived by Parliament, began once more to take matters into their own hands, prescient persons began to doubt whether, when the class-struggle awoke in earnest, the "Left-wing" politician would prove to be so much to the left after all.

Pacifism remained the main difference between the I.L.P. leaders and the Trade Unionists ; and when the war broke out their pacifismkept them still on the left. It ranged MacDonald for once in the same camp as Lenin and his group, and on one occasion even (in the Leeds Conference of 1917) nearly embroiled Snowden with the Soviet system. The I.L.P. thus gained a reputation as the party which had never bowed the knee to Baal—a reputation which served it well when the war-fever was over. It was joined, from 1917-18 onwards, not merely by disillusioned soldiers and workers, but by Liberal politicians and middle-class intellectuals who saw that there was no future in the Liberal Party for either their careers or their creeds.

From 1919 it went from strength to strength. The new constitution of the Labour Party gave its members an entry into all the local parties ; it replaced the Trade Union leader of the Labour Party in the House of Commons by its own leader, MacDonald ; having now acquired an intellectual element as strong as the Fabians it elbowed them to one side ; when the Communist Party appeared it easily prevented it from being officially recognised. Finally, in 1923, it decisively beat the Liberals and became a Government, filling the chief posts with its own leaders.

Then came trouble. The I.L.P. leaders had never bothered to provide a strategic programme for their rank and file. The Labour Party schemes for dealing with various problems, such as the unemployed, the Poor Law, &c., had mostly been elaborated by the Fabians ; and in any case were long gradual processes requiring a long lease of power. No one had ever discussed the steps which

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ought to be immediately taken in the event of a short lease of power, still less of a minority government. When Sidney Webb hinted mildly that resolutions passed in the fine air of conferences might find themselves modified in the heat of practical politics, he was generally felt to have committed an indecency. In effect, the Labour Government went into office without its supporters, either in the House of Commons or in the country, knowing in the least what it hoped or intended to do.

The result was a terrible confusion in the minds of the rank and file. After the first flush of hope, it rapidly became apparent that the MacDonald Government was much the same as any other Government, and had no intention of taking, or even attempting to take, any steps towards Socialism. Discontent grew ; but was difficult to express. The Government could not be accused of departing from its programme, for no programme had ever been laid down for the practical situation, and any complaints could always be met by the phrase " in office, but not in power." The rank and file had to fall back on protest against those actions of the Government which seemed most flagrantly anti-Labour, the tardy recognition of Russia, the dressing-up at Court functions, the Campbell prosecution, the attitude to strikes, &c., &c., right up to the crowning folly of the Zinoviev letter, which defeated the best electioneering efforts of the I.L.P. by bringing out the capitalist reserves.

Then, last Easter, came the stock-taking. It was an anxious moment for the I.L.P. leaders. The Government had drawn very heavily upon the reserves of loyalty and there were signs that the stocks were getting low. At the same time, even the simplest Socialist had come to see that the total absence of a programme might have its disadvantages. " Trust MacDonald and keep your powder dry," is a fine battle-cry, but it is well to be sure in which direction the guns are pointing.

There were two dangers, first, that the Conference might turn down the Labour Government, secondly, that it might lay down hampering conditions for the next Labour Government. Of these the second was the most likely, since it is extraordinarily difficult to carry a direct vote of censure in a big Conference. Actually, in spite of the efforts of the Executive, the Conference rejected the

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paragraphs of the report which dealt with the Red Letter, and mustered a strong vote against any congratulation whatever being extended to the Labour Government. These were inconvenient, but not fatal incidents.

The two dangers aforesaid were tackled by the Chairman at the outset. Clifford Allen is at once a pastmaster in the art of "pure" politics, and a man who has bound his own fortunes up closely with those of the I.L.P. His speech is therefore worthy of the closest attention. He gave no quarter to the suggestion that, as the Labour Government had been, on its own confession, hopelessly hampered by being in a minority, no Labour Government should again take office without a majority, pointing out that in that case it would be many many years before a Labour Government would take office again. The implication clearly is that office, and not the introduction of Socialism, is the aim. With regard to the discontents, he associated himself very gently with the complainants. That part of his speech was, in effect, a delicate hint to MacDonald that he had got a little out of touch with his late comrades, and that if he would only take Allen's advice and consult the susceptibilities of the rank and file before dressing himself up in a sword and kneebreeches his great services would not be so much in danger of going unappreciated. (MacDonald, it would appear, did not altogether take the hint in good part ; at all events, in his reply he referred to "small-minded critics," and suggested that he was awaiting the judgment of the world on his actions.)

Allen was so far successful in that nothing more was heard of the proposal to wait for a majority. There were, however, other snags in the way.

Principally, there was the industrial movement. Since the events of 1921 finally broke down the theory of class co-operation in industry, the industrial movement has been steadily moving to the left. This is not a case (as before the war) of the rank and file revolting against their leaders ; the rank and file, taken as a whole, is still too hard hit to do anything of the kind. It is the whole movement, leaders and all (with of course, some right honourable exceptions), which is being gradually forced by the logic of events to the conclusion that there is no way out except by a change of system, and a change brought about by the economic power of the

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workers. This, of course, runs directly counter to the ideas of a political party bent on securing Parliamentary office, with or without power ; and so, as has already been pointed out in other quarters, the industrial movement has, during the past two years, found itself well to the left of the I.L.P. leaders—a position accentuated by the lack of consideration shown to the General Council by the Labour Government, as well as by the same Government's attitude to industrial disputes.

Strikes are a grave inconvenience to a political party bent on proving itself fit to govern in "continuity" (convenient word !) with the older parties. But the I.L.P., many of whose M.P.'s rely on Trade Union money, cannot afford to ignore the Trade Unions altogether, even if they are only "shadows of their former selves," as an indiscreet I.L.P.'er suggested. Allen's speech, therefore, while arguing that strikes, in the ordinary way, were useless and disastrous, and delivering an insulting dig at men who, themselves in safe jobs, urged other people to give up theirs, suggested a policy for the industrial movement. This policy (subsequently embodied in a long resolution) was—*to call upon the Government* to set up a National Commission to determine a living wage . . . *the standard not being liable to depreciation by any variation of prices* ; in the event of Parliament *endorsing the recommendations of the Commission*, each industry to reorganise itself so as to be able to pay the fixed wage ; failing such reorganisation, Parliament to determine what form of public ownership or control is needed to meet the case. If Parliament did not endorse the recommendations, it was explained, or if the wage suggested was very low, there would be material for a magnificent propaganda campaign.

Much might be said about the economic implications of this resolution ; but its main purpose is simply defeatist. The miners, the railwaymen, the engineers, are to hold their hands until the present Government has appointed a Commission (like the Food Commission ?), until the Commission has reported, which might easily take several years, until the recommendations have been passed by Parliament and the industries concerned been given an opportunity (under the capitalist system !) of putting them into effect ; or alternatively, until a great propaganda campaign has been worked up—for what purpose? *To put the I.L.P. back into office.*

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This resolution, however, is the industrial policy of the I.L.P. leaders, and it was the only resolution passed by Conference on industrial matters.

The promise extorted from the Executive to set in motion again their moribund committee on industrial policy need not be taken seriously.

Lastly, we come to the question of socialisation, where Allen stepped aside and left the running to Hugh Dalton. The report on that subject, drawn up by a Committee of the Executive, decisively rejects confiscation, because of the millions of votes which such a policy might be expected to antagonise. It proposes to pay in terminable annuities for all industries socialised and to raise the money by taxation, increased death duties, &c. Clearly taxation, if increased to such a height as to provide terminable annuities for the shareholders in even the principal industries, becomes in effect a recurrent Capital Levy, in addition to the one already earmarked for scaling down the war debt. It may be remarked that since 1922 all the Labour Party leaders have been engaged in burying the Capital Levy as quickly as possible ; but apart from that, the use of a continual levy to confiscate capitalist profits is certain to react sharply upon industry, and is, in fact, simply incompatible with "sound finance" of the Snowden type. It must be admitted that this report was not put to the vote ; but it is being sent round for the consideration of the branches, and there is no minority report, since the Left on the committee, like the Left in most organisations, had no alternative policy.

We may now sum up the present position of the I.L.P. It has repudiated confiscation, and bases its socialisation plans on the possibility of securing indefinite sums by taxation ; it has definitely condemned strikes and put off industrial action to the Greek Kalends ; whether or no these concessions secure it sufficient votes from the middle-class and the petty bourgeoisie to give it a majority it has decided to take office again without any guarantee that the new Government will act in any way differently from the old one. At least, its leaders have decided that, and the Conference has acquiesced. But it should be remembered that this Conference was very carefully stage-managed. The length of the agenda, and the known willingness of delegates to any conference, if given rope, to

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exhaust their fellows with enormous speeches, made it very easy for the Executive to get rid of awkward resolutions. The Left was unorganised and lacked an alternative programme. But the great majority of the I.L.P. in spite of the ex-Liberal influx, are still Socialists, as witness their unwillingness, save in a few areas, to join in pushing out the Communists, however much they disagree with their methods. They are—and this cannot be too firmly grasped by anyone concerned in the future of the I.L.P.—plain Socialists, with a great deal of loyalty to their old leaders. But loyalty has this peculiarity ; it lasts a long time and then gives out suddenly. And even the simplest Socialist is apt sooner or later to find out the difference between plain Socialism and plain reaction. The leaders of the I.L.P. have chosen the latter course and at present hold the field; it is for the Left to see whether the membership continues to follow them.

Owing to extreme pressure on our space "THE WORLD OF LABOUR" *and Lenin's* "ON THE ROAD TO INSURRECTION" *are held over till next month.*

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TROTSKY AND HIS "FRIENDS"

I GATHER from the *Labour Weekly* and the *Plebs* that Postgate and Horrabin are displeased with me. They rebuke me sternly. The creator of "Dot and Carrie" ("just a trifle shocking, please, Mr. Horrabin" was the instruction, was it not?) is scornful of "fluent journalists who write to order." Postgate, who should be a good judge of such matters, hints that I have changed my opinions at some word of command.

And all this because, in the LABOUR MONTHLY and in the *Daily Herald*, I spoke my mind about that tragically bad book of Trotsky's on Lenin.

Now if this were just a personal squabble, a piece of back-chat between "fluent journalists" (I thank thee, Horrabin, for teaching me that phrase) it would not matter a line of type. What they think of me, and what I think of them, are of not the least consequence to the Labour Movement. I apologise to them if they have a different appraisement of our triple importance. And I should not trouble to comment on it, or even on the fact that either wilfully or from "incurable sloppiness" they quite misrepresent what I wrote, but for the fact that their attitude does by chance throw not unimportant light on a quite important historical event.

Why is it that Postgate and Horrabin are—or were a week or two ago—so blindly devoted to Trotsky that any criticism of their idol has brought them out with bell, book and candle against the critic? It is not because he is one of the greatest revolutionary leaders the working-class has had. For they are angry with me who said just this of him. It is not because they have studied carefully the controversies in the Russian Communist Party and have come to the considered conclusion that Trotsky was right, for Postgate makes perfectly clear in his pontifical article ("now at last we are able to give the true story") that he has scarcely studied the subject at all. And Horrabin's study seems to have been confined to editorial perusal of Maurice Dobb's certainly excellent article in the *Plebs*.

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No. Their enthusiasm for Trotsky is based simply on the fact that they conceive him to be in revolt against the Russian Communist Party. And, having themselves resigned in pique from the British Party, they are thrilled to find Trotsky—as they fondly imagine—playing the same rôle in Russia.

They are furious that Trotsky should have been forced to resign his office. They demand apparently that he should have been allowed to continue, while a member of the Government, to launch attack after attack on his colleagues. This they presumably call "liberty." It is not liberty. It is not even anarchy. It is just muddle-headed nonsense. A government is not a theoretical debating society, but an executive organ. And no executive organ can function if its members are carrying on open polemics against each other. It is not anything to do with "Communist discipline." It is just common sense. Suppose Arthur Henderson last year had disagreed violently and publicly with MacDonald's foreign policy, and had, in the course of the argument, proceeded to publish a History of the War containing bitter personal attacks on MacDonald's conduct in 1914. Would he not have been asked at once to resign? And would anyone outside a lunatic asylum have declared that this was a spiteful and sordid intrigue against him?

Trotsky disagreed with his colleagues, fought for his point of view, was beaten, and proceeded to campaign against them publicly. It was an intolerable situation that had to be ended.

How dangerous it was the example of Postgate and Horrabin—and herein lies their only importance—proves. For just as they, knowing and caring little about the issues, at once became "Trotskyists," hoping, "under the banner of his great renown" to damage the Communist Party, so did their analogues in Russia also begin to rally round Trotsky. Disgruntled Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, S.-R.'s, even monarchists, began to look to him as the leader who would break the Party. It may surprise Postgate and Horrabin, but it is a fact that last year Tsarist intriguers in London were boasting that they would "use Trotsky and then kill him." There was real danger—which Postgate and Horrabin, who appear to regard revolutionary politics as a series of personal squabbles, will perhaps not understand.

And it is precisely here that lies the danger of Cæsarism.

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Trotsky was, of course, not aiming at becoming a Napoleon. He is—nor have I ever suggested otherwise—a perfectly loyal revolutionary. But events are apt to be too strong for men. Suppose that Trotsky, with a motley following whose only link was his leadership, had continued to fight against the Communist Party. Suppose that he had won. His triumph would have been a personal one. His power would only be a personal power. Either he must have gone down in his turn—as the Tsarists hoped—before a triumphant counter-revolution, or he must have established a regime dependent entirely upon his own genius, his own dynamic power, his own wonderful qualities of leadership and personal ascendancy over men. And what in the world is that if not Napoleonism?

There, for those with eyes to see, was the tremendous danger. It was a tragic business indeed: far more tragic for those of us who have known Trotsky personally than for the Postgates and Horrabins: most tragic of all for those who had worked side by side with him in the tremendous tasks of the Revolution. But it had to be done. Either Trotsky must, at any cost, be disciplined; or he might, by reason of his very greatness, destroy the Revolution.

One word more. I am convinced—I think I made it plain in my review—that to a very large degree the source of the trouble was Trotsky's illness. He was—as the Lenin book made pathetically clear—a sick man, a man not perfect master of his nerves or mind. I doubt if, in full health, he would have made such blunders, if he would have failed so wretchedly to see whither he was drifting. In sickness he became more nervous, more impetuous, more egotistic. His temperament had always been a troublesome servant. It became a perilous master.

If it is true—as it seems to be true—that Trotsky has now recovered his health, then probably we may count the whole wretched episode past. For Trotsky in health will resume his rightful place as the great revolutionary leader. He will see into what perilous paths he was drifting while not master of himself.

He will be grateful to those who successfully restrained him. But his scorn for those who tried to exploit him while he was sick, who tried to use the splendour of his reputation as a weapon against the Russian Communist Party, will be devastating.

W. N. E.

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BOOK REVIEW

"MIRRORS OF THE KREMLIN, BY A COMRADE WITH A DUSTER"; OR, SUBJECTIVISM IN POLITICS.

Since Lenin Died. By Max Eastman. Labour Publishing Company. 2s. 6d.

AN ironic fate has overtaken this book. Written just after the heat of the Trotsky controversy in the Russian Communist Party, it expresses a burning and passionate partisanship on behalf of Comrade Trotsky and a fierce and vehement denunciation of the unscrupulous villainy of the other leaders, and of the corruption and disruption of the Russian Communist Party. Unfortunately, at the moment of its appearance, comes the news of the reconciliation of Comrade Trotsky and the villains of the piece, and on top of that comes a personal repudiation of the book in advance by Comrade Trotsky himself.

(This will not, of course, prevent its use, has not prevented its use already, in the pettier columns of the Right-wing Labour and bourgeois Press. However, we are used to that.)

The controversies of International Communism are notoriously not the same, nor are the methods of procedure the same, as bourgeois controversies. Whoever steps into them from the muddy bourgeois point of view of "personal politics" is liable to get his fingers scorched.

This book is of value still as a test of political judgment. If its publication were a question only affecting the author, one's immediate instinct on reading it would be simply to say :—

> Max Eastman has made a bad mistake. He has let his artistic sense, which enabled him to do good propagandist work for the revolution during its romantic period, run away with him. He has not only forgotten any Marxism (of this he is uneasily conscious, as repeated footnotes show), he has forgotten any serious politics at all. This is an excited book, a personal book, an artistic book (some of it is as dramatic as a good novel). He says strong things of which he probably does not realise the force or the consequence. He is carried away by his own argument and lapses into pre-communist old style "Liberator" types of outlook. It is unfortunate if this book should compel him to burn his boats politically.

In fact, however, the production of this book is a political act, and has to be treated as such, whatever the psychology that produced it.

What is the difference between the Marxist and the bourgeois outlook on current events and questions? There are many aspects that might be brought out, but for the moment a very simple statement may be made. The bourgeois outlook sees always the surface of events, the immediate process, the question of the day, the problem of the moment, without seeking to inquire further; beyond, is only speculation and day-dreaming. Even the most powerful bourgeois statesmen, of the Pitt or Bismarck type, are only strong in the sense that they look to the more permanent interests of their particular State, calculate

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ahead over a generation, but are still wholly unconscious of the wider march of history, of the inevitable disappearance of their particular State and of the whole regime with which they are associated. This necessity they only envisage as a "possibility" or a "danger" to guard against. That is to say, even the most objective bourgeois statesmen are unable to rid themselves of this element of subjectivity. Only Marxism is fully objective, fully scientific. Marxism alone takes all the facts of human history into consideration and bases its calculations upon them, sees the process of growth and decay of every phenomenon, continually inquires into the cause and the underlying connections and never accepts the temporary event or personal manifestation at its own surface valuation.

This difference becomes blatant, when we come to the ordinary daily expressions of the bourgeois outlook, the expressions of current bourgeois journalism and politics, which are, unfortunately, the principal educational school of the workers in Western Europe and America. Here all political analysis disappears into the personal. All events happen because such and such a person conceives such and such an idea or undergoes such and such an accident. The war happened because of the Kaiser, Napoleon was defeated because he had the stomach-ache, &c. Politics turns into the struggle of persons for power (and even international politics turns into the struggle of enlarged persons, called nations, John Bull, Uncle Sam, &c.).

From this basis the deepest political knowledge becomes the knowledge of what happens "behind the scenes." On this basis a whole vast literature arises of "Politics from Within," "Secret History," "Indiscretions," "The Truth About ——" "Sensational Revelations," "The Curtain Raised," "What I know," &c., &c., all of which in a thousand forms, from snappy paragraphs for the million circulations to twelve and sixpenny volumes for the readers in circulating libraries, constitutes the chosen political pabulum supplied by the bourgeois regime for the education of bourgeois democracy.

This literature is undoubtedly better than the would-be "serious" political literature of the bourgeois ("Thoughts on the Empire," "Principles of Liberty," "My Ideals," "Raising the Race," "Ethics of Citizenship"), and is often useful, so long as its contents are not believed, for gauging atmospheres. But as a substitute for politics it is inadequate.

Let us take one or two examples. First, an example from ordinary bourgeois politics—the displacement of Asquith by Lloyd George in 1916, which forms an important turning point in modern bourgeois history.

This displacement took place by a process of intrigue, the full details of which can only be known (and probably not even completely in their case) to the direct main participants. For this reason it forms a sensational attraction for the bourgeois journalistic outlook. Two types of treatment may be observed. One is an indignant repudiation of the whole process, a vehement sponsoring of the honour and integrity of Mr. Asquith so foully abused ("if the British people only knew"), disgust at the shady adventurer types brought into the shrine of imperial politics, pessimistic outlook as to the future of British politics. The other is a simple sensational interest in the romantic, startling, incredible character of the whole performance, triumphant acclamation of "the Man

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and the Hour," avid desire for more and yet more intimate details of "how it really happened."

It is clear that neither of these types of treatment have anything to do with the politics of the case. In the light of events we can summarise quite simply and say that the older, more stable and conservative bourgeois interests, represented by Asquith and Lansdowne, which were alarmed at the uncertain future and the possibilities of revolutionary change and were consequently wavering in the direction of peace, were replaced by the driving war-profiteering interests, represented by Lloyd George, which drew the whole bourgeoisie after them in their reckless pursuit of "the bitter end"—and so performed their historic task of working for us. The fact that this drive necessitated certain intrigues, the importation of certain new adventurer types and demagogic methods, disruption of certain parliamentary traditions and so forth, all this is only of incidental illustrative interest, affording certain useful indications as to the relative strength of the forces, social elements, &c., but is in no sense the politics of the case. Even to the bourgeois governing outlook all this would be irrelevant; the question being, not as to the integrity of Mr. Asquith or the brilliance of Mr. Lloyd George (passionate declamations on which would only have aroused complete indifference), but as to which governing force at the given moment best represented bourgeois interests.

Let us add to this another example from working class history—the collapse of the Second International in 1914. Here a tremendous number of personal histories took place, in the leading ranks of all the parties, in the hour of betrayal, not a fraction of which has yet been told, and most of which will probably never be told. Nevertheless a complete collection of "inside" stories of the collapse would not constitute a true Marxist account of it. The essence of the collapse was not the betrayal of certain leaders—which was only the expression. If that were all the lesson, it would be a poor lesson. As Marx himself wrote of the collapse of 1848 :—

> What a poor chance stands a political party whose entire stock-in-trade consists in a knowledge of the solitary fact that Citizen So-and-so is not to be trusted.

The essence of the collapse was the collapse of a certain ideology, the collapse of a certain type of movement, the exposure of the workings of Opportunism in the working-class movement in the imperialist epoch and its inevitable outcome.

1921 constitutes another example which can be readily filled out. "Black Friday" will have been of value to the movement, not to the extent that it is treated as simply an exposure of certain individual leaders, but to the extent that its revolutionary lesson is understood.

* * * *

Now in the light of this let us come to Max Eastman's treatment of the Trotsky controversy of 1923–1924.

Let us begin with the question at its lowest. Whatever else it was, that controversy was at any rate a big event. It shook and tested the Russian Communist Party, was of dominating importance in the Russian situation, was closely followed by the bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries, as well as

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by the international revolutionary movement, was in short a leading fact of world politics. Such a fact is at any rate worth understanding, worth a careful examination of the political forces involved both in Russia and all over the world, an endeavour to inquire what they represent, to estimate their objective political significance, and draw conclusions from the point of view of the international revolutionary movement.

We are aware of the general situation in Russia, the problems raised by Nep and the transitional economic situation, the inevitable danger of new strata developing strength and trying to find political expression, the inevitablity of that attempt after political expression trying to find its way through the workers' party, the Communist Party, as the sole organ of political expression in working-class Russia, and the supreme necessity of absolute solidarity against any such inroads. We know that elements of a secretly organised Menshevik "Opposition" had already been found within the Party and dealt with. We know the individuality of Trotsky, his genius and his admitted political instability over a long period of years, which have shown him to be as unreliable in "peaceful" times as he is valuable in the moment of war. And we know at the same time the readiness of the enemy forces to seize on any possibility of division or ingress into the workers' ranks.

We turn to the actual alignment of the controversy and find a grouping of forces of immense significance. We find on the one hand elements of every type other than the proletariat: we find elements of the Youth appealed to, elements of the Army staffs, elements of the Intellectuals, ranging themselves, elements of the Nep bourgeoisie ranging themselves, and then outside Russia the imperialist bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks, the Right-wing labour organs, the renegades from Communism—all openly staking their hopes on Trotsky. Whether or how far Trotsky by his actions was responsible for such an alignment taking place, that is a question for the moment irrelevant. We are concerned with the objective fact of the alignment. On the other hand we find the solid forces of the organised workers expressing themselves with absolute unanimity (on all the previous big issues there has always been some minority vote—in this, none) expressing themselves through the Communist Party and the Communist International.

It is clear that we are here face to face with a class issue of world importance. To fail to see that issue, to fail to discuss it and consider what it implies, and in the light of that total situation to examine the particular events, acts, expressions (acts and expressions which in isolation might seem to be no more than "blunders," but in a given situation can become of extreme seriousness)—to fail to do this means in fact not to deal with the controversy at all, but only to register certain emotional subjective reactions which have no value save as a very revealing picture of the psychology of the writer.

We turn to Max Eastman and what do we find? *We find in Max Eastman as in his view the essence of the whole question, the old familiar bourgeois recipe of the personal struggle for power.*

Lest this may not be believed, it is necessary to quote his own final summing up in conclusion :—

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CONCLUSION

> A group of leaders against whose domination Lenin warned the party, having disguised their own thirst of power privately under the legend that Trotsky is a Bonaparte, and having disguised the private legend publicly under the legend that he is the leader of a " deviation to the Right," and having thus built up an ideology exactly twice removed from the simple truth, have succeeded in deceiving, or bewildering or bulldozing or otherwise silencing or scattering to the ends of the earth, all those strong Communists who might oppose them.

" A group of leaders," " thirst of power," " legend," " deceiving," " bulldozing," " silencing." And this is a " Marxist " account—not of events in some South American Republic, where even there it would be a contemptible substitute for an analysis, but might at any rate have surface value as a record of events—but of leading developments of the Communist International and the Russian Revolution, containing and representing the vanguard of the world working class and the central point of world history.

To the bourgeois mind, of course, this will appear an eminently reasonable account—it is just as they are sure it probably did happen, just as they know (they have seen the inside of this kind of thing) these things do happen. And all the abuse and denunciation of the Communist leaders, the suggestions of scandal (from the White Press) they will lap up with greedy delight.

Max Eastman is, however, a little uneasy. In a footnote elsewhere he tries to defend himself against the suggestion that he has forgotten his Marxism, and his defence finally gives him away. He says :—

> A great many Marxians will consider this whole book of mine too personal . . . My reason for demonstrating so exhaustively, and so often repeating, the fact that the attack upon Trotsky was and is dishonest, is not that I think that the essence of the question, but that *unless he knows this*, the western reader cannot possibly come at the essence of the question. Owing to the discipline of the Party and the International, and the necessity of revolutionary solidarity in Russia, the whole news-explanation of this dispute is in the hands of the bureaucracy : and they are using Marxian ideas as weapons in a personal fight. The only way to get down to the *facts* which interest a Marxian, is to expose this dishonest use of Marxian *ideas*.

" They are using Marxian ideas in a personal fight." It is a commonplace of Marxist analysis to take some particular ideology or type of expression and discover its basis or character from the standpoint of Marxism, *i.e.*, its class basis, relation to class struggle, &c. Here, however, a reversal has appeared. *For Max Eastman Marxism is the ideology : the reality is the " personal fight."* This is the New Marxism of Max Eastman by the light of which he is enabled to attack the leaders and party of the Russian Revolution.

* * * *

So the whole Trotsky controversy is degraded into a cheap film-drama for Western European and American readers.

First, enter the Hero, Trotsky.

> Trotsky is a proud man, and he has that consciousness of self that proud men have, and that makes their relations with people too personal (p. 12).
>
> The organisation of the Red Army, created by Trotsky, understood by him, loyal to him (p. 82).

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Trotsky marshalled the workers and soldiers of Russia for the Bolshevik insurrection (p. 16).

Trotsky began to realise that, although his political analysis of the coming revolution had been the more happy, Lenin had created an organisation and invented a political method (p. 12).

An elevation of thought and language that is unexcelled in the literature of revolution (p. 83).

The almost quixotic delicacy of Trotsky's conduct in the matter of personal relations with his comrades in the revolution. His æsthetic, or, if you will, ethical elevation in such matters, is painful (p. 63).

Ugh ! Trotsky may have committed many crimes, but he never deserved this.

Second, enter the Villains (plainly marked).

The deliberately unscrupulous campaign (p. 89).

Cheapest tricks of the demagogue (p. 92).

A campaign of subtle and plausible misrepresentation (p. 93).

Not the slightest breath of sincerity (p. 128).

Third, enter the Innocent Victim (the Party—" bulldozed ").

A condition of intellectual mob hysteria (p. 60).

A thoughtless, blind and convulsive stampede . . . the emotional and intellectual weak points of the Russian Communist (p. 52).

Why did 3,000 party workers, agitated by a speech from Zinoviev, put their names to this statement, which is obviously false (p. 67).

From these quotations, which could be multiplied indefinitely, the reader who has not yet read the book should be able to construct its character.

* * * *

This is not history. It is not politics. And it is certainly not Revolutionary Communism, Marxism, or loyalty to the working class.

R. P. D.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

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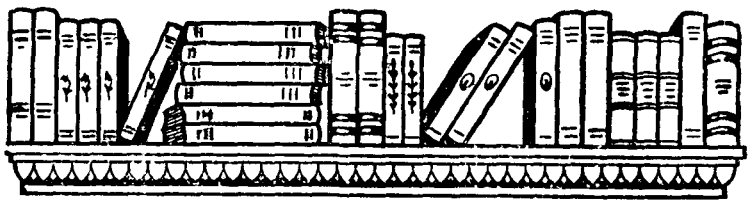

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